Voyage into oneself



Vimala Thakar

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It seems to me that life has a very strange way of bringing people together. A few months ago, if somebody would have told me that I would be visiting California, I would not have believed it. And today here we are sitting together in a very quiet room, not to hear some scholarly academic discourse, but to have a frank verbal communication about the fundamentals of life and living.

Being an utter stranger to your land, let me have the liberty of mentioning that the speaker you have amidst you this afternoon, is not a professional speaker, preacher or teacher - not a sannyasi or a yogi or someone coming from the dark East with some authority behind her. It is just one of the anonymous friends of yours, born and brought up in the East, who has come to you in a friendly way. This is an unusual dimension as far as spiritual matters are concerned both in the East and in the West. There is a universal notion that someone with authority comes and gives the word, expecting others to follow it. But what we are going to go through this afternoon is nothing of that kind, it is just going to be a very simple, plain, friendly conversation, if you would like the word.

The thing that surprises a person like me, who travels across oceans and visits various countries, is the fact that though human beings have been inhabiting this globe for thousands of years, we are not able to live as a totally developed human person.

Living is not existing. Living is not something fragmentary.

Living is something which is done in totality. A flower which is blossoming, comes out, every petal of it. The beauty and the scent which were hidden in the bud, comes out completely. A fruit, when it grows ripe, grows ripe in its totality; not one part of it getting ripe and having the juice and the other part remaining unripe. The maturity of a fruit is in getting ripe in its totality. The same with the flower.

But we, the human beings, do not grow in our totality, we grow in parts; in fragments; biological growth, psychological growth, refining and cultivating the intellect, refining the mind, enriching the memory, widening the horizons of our information and knowledge etc. One wonders whether we realize that the biological growth and the psychological growth, however remarkable they have been in the bygone centuries, do not exhaust the totality of human consciousness. Man is much more than the biological and psychological structure.

Up till now it has been a partial growth. We have been living fragmentarily; taking care of the bodies; taking care of the mind, the memory and the brain; creating a comfortable situation and surroundings for the self, the me, the ego, which is the centre of the psychological structure. We have been engrossed with it. But there still remains a dimension of consciousness and life which is not tapped; which is not explored. This is not a statement. This is an observation of life. Had it not been the partial growth or fragmentary growth, man would not have been so unhappy individually and collectively as he is today.

He has explored the five elements. He has conquered the oceans. He is now on his way to conquer space. Due to the advance in science and technology, he has made space and time shrink before him. He has reduced the whole world to a small human family. Man has done all this. And yet today man is not at peace with himself. You may travel across any country, the underdeveloped or the developed, the noncommunist free democratic countries with their philosophical, cultural and spiritual heritage, and you will find that man

has not yet learned to live in peace with himself. He lives in conflict. He lives in tension. There are contradictions in his own person which he has not resolved. Collectively how sad he is, you know much better than I do. We have the Vietnams and Biafras; we have the tensions in the Middle East and we have the tensions between India and Pakistan. You have the racial tensions in USA. You have the tension in Czecho-Slovakia. So this lack of capacity to live in peace with oneself; to live in relaxation, love and friendship, indicates that we have not grown totally. Perhaps we are carrying within us the hang-over of the animal world. We have the human form but the content of human-ness, the essence of humanity, has not ripened in us. We are not mature human beings. We are half human beings and half human animals. That is how we are dwelling on this globe.

It is not a very pleasant truth. I am afraid truth is not very pleasant anyhow. It is sharp like a sword. The very observation or understanding of truth cuts through ignorance in our hearts. The cutting through is very painful. Let us understand this plain truth, that out of the human animal, a totally developed human being is yet to emerge.

Religion consists of this total growth. The essence of religion is growing totally into a new dimension of life. It is not a mental activity. It is not intellectual acquirement of theories, principles, formulas or ideologies. It is not adopting new patterns of behaviour. It seems to be growing into a new dimension of consciousness, which will give a new perspective of the world around and within us.

That is what I would like to talk about with you if I may. It is not necessary to indicate that the very word religion denotes reunion with the roots of life. Where are the roots of life? Where is the main source of life? We have not found it in the mind or in the brain. We have explored the mind, the conscious, the subconscious and the unconscious. By the term 'we' I imply the whole of humanity. Where else can we explore them now? An enquiry into the source of life is the beginning of religion. It is not decorating intellect with theo-

ries or principles, it is not entertaining the emotion with new patterns of behaviour. Religion is something very serious. It is something which goes very deep. It removes us from the superficial layers of existence and obliges us to go deeper within ourselves. It is an inward journey to find out the beyond within us. Religion is a personal discovery of the source of life. That is what the world needs today. Human beings who will get back to the roots, live there, move from there, and act out of there is what we need.

We are an uprooted lot, scattered in different countries, battling against one another with the weapons of ideologies, theories, dogmas, traditions and patterns of conditioning. Whether we do it in the name of the nation and the concept of national sovereignty, or we do it in the name of ideology, we are battling with one another on this level. And individually we are battling against one another, fighting with one another on the basis of our likes and dislikes, preferences and prejudices, norms, standards and values. We have codes of conduct for individual life and we pitch one code of conduct against that of another. Or we fight in the name of the nation and say: my country before the other countries. It is obvious that this mind, this intellect, cluttered with all that stuff, is surely not the essence of human life. The essence lies somewhere else.

One wonders how many persons are willing to launch upon this inward journey to get to the roots within them and find out how that growth changes qualitatively the texture of their relationships. How getting back to the roots and living and moving from there, radically changes the quality of relationships with one another.

So a serious enquiry, or an inward journey is the first step towards religion. The journey has to be taken alone. One cannot fall back upon the authority or the experience of other persons. One can learn about them. One can learn from them, but not fall back upon them. Religious enquiry is something very serious. I would like to emphasize it very much indeed, as one comes across people who treat it as an

intellectual pastime or an emotional recreation.

I have not visited your country. But visiting the countries in Europe, Asia and the Middle East, one feels very sad that this basic enquiry of truth and reality is looked upon rather lightly on a superficial level of intellect and mind.

If one is happy with the gratification of biological needs, if one is happy with the material comfort and economic security, then the flame of enquiry is not born in that heart. If one feels satisfied with theories about religion, with conforming to certain traditions and patterns, then the flame of enquiry does not burn bright in the heart. So one must find out if one really wants to find out what truth is, if there is a demand, a need, an urge in the heart to find out what truth is.

It is an inward journey. We do not know what is going to happen. One may have to go through all sorts of experiences which might be very strange. One may have to come face to face with ugliness lying within one's own self. All the images that one has created about oneself may be shattered completely. They many be broken down to pieces. This going beyond the senses and the mind, needs courage. It needs tremendous courage; health of body; a nervous system which is strong like steel and a healthy mind which will not be frightened by the facts when they are discovered.

One would like to emphasize that religious enquiry is not a play of children. It is something serious. It is dangerous. And yet, without the personal discovery of what truth is, life is meaningless. Without getting back to the roots or the source of life, living becomes a repetitive process. And one is bored by that. People, I think, in this country, have realized by now, that having three meals a day, having a beautiful car and having a house, is not everything. Man does not live by that. Something is missing. That sense of loneliness and sense of something is missing, becomes more and more acute. So personal discovery of truth, though it may be full of dangers and risks, is the content of living. One who dares discover truth for himself lives. Those who do not dare discover truth personally and are satisfied with borrowed con-

clusions and experiences of other people, go on living vicariously. It is a secondhand life. There is no charm in it. There is no grace. There is no life in it.

One has used the word discovery. You know, one has to use words. When one has to use words in relation to the intangible, invisible world, which exists beyond the mind, one realizes that no word satisfies. Every word is loaded with some association; every word is related to the known; to the world of duality; so both the speaker and the listeners will have to be very cautious about the use of words. Though I have used the words 'personal discovery of truth', it is not something that I am going to discover with the help of my mind or brain. The mistake man has been making through centuries is to regard truth and reality as something to be acquired by the mind or the ego. Though we have used the term discovery, truth is not something to be acquired by the mind. Discovery of truth is not an act of the will. It is not a mental action. Mind and brain, which have been trained and cultivated and refined through centuries is not the instrument which will help us in this discovery. So let us be clear that mind is not going to be of any help to us in this inward journey. It has its limited use. The content of our mind itself becomes the frontier which it cannot transcend. So on this journey, we cannot carry the mind. If we try to carry the mind with us and try to discover truth through it we will land somewhere else. Mind is unequal to the task of leading us to the source, to the reality.

All of you must be knowing that mind or brain is like a machine. It is an instrument at our disposal like the hands and the feet. It is a subtle intangible thing. All your knowledge, information, experience gets reduced to certain chemicals in the braincells. When you eat food it is converted into blood and tissues; then glands and muscles are formed out of the food that you have eaten. In the same way, all the information, the knowledge and experience get converted into chemicals which are stored in certain brain cells. When you come into contact with the so-called material world, the

stimulus awakens certain reaction or response. That response can be emotional or intellectual. That is how the brain works. It is a mechanistic action, receiving the impression through the sense-organs, the nervous system carrying the impression to the brain cells, braincells responding according to their conditioning. That is how the mind works.

Sometimes the sense-organs are not working and the surface-consciousness is quiet and then the memories, the personal memories or the memories of the family, or the memories of the religious community or the race in which one happens to be born, come to the surface. And one gets visions and experiences. They are called transcendental experiences, but this is all on the level of the mind; the conscious, the subconscious and the unconscious - but still on the level of the mind. So every mental action is a mechanical action. Mechanical action cannot lead us to the source of our energy.

Mental action is limited by the frontiers created by knowledge and experience. The very content of our consciousness becomes its own bondage. It constitutes the frontiers. So it is no use trying to get there with the help of mind. We will have to leave the mind in peace. Let it alone, letting the mind alone is so difficult. We live through the mind the whole day. We function through the mind from morning till night. Receiving impressions, interpreting them, responding to them, whether necessary or unwarrantedly goes on throughout the day. We go on reacting and this process of reacting has become the content of our living. We are reacting to the impressions carried over by the nervous system. If we are sitting alone, then we play with the memory. We are afraid that the mind becomes quiet, we will be paralyzed; there will be a void; there will be an emptiness; there will be a negation of action. And therefore, man struggles to keep the mind active. He turns away from the so-called secular or mundane mind. He turns towards the extra-sensory world and wants to acquire experiences of that world with the help of the mind.

That is not religion. It is the mischief of the ego. The ego

is the creator of a hundred-and-one illusions. Let us tell the ego very plainly: 'sir, this is none of your business, be quiet'. We do not want to kill the mind, we do not want to suppress the ego. Man has tried that through centuries. Man has disciplined the mind, controlled the mind and mutilated the ego through austerities. The more you try to suppress the more you become aggressive. The more you try to discipline the mind, the more are the eruptions of the tortured mind. It is not the way. Suffice it to say: let the mind alone.

Cerebral activity is not the only activity we are capable of. This partial and fragmentary activity of the mind is only one part of us. If we allow the mind to be quiet and to cease to function, if we do not tempt it with a different field or area of action but just let it be quiet, and relax, then in the cessation of mental activity, silence comes to life. Silence, not as an experience of the mind, but as a dimension of consciousness. It is not a state of mind, a mind experiencing silence is not silent. Silence of total mind is something marvellous. It is not an abstract impersonal idea, nor an Utopia, but something living and vibrating. If one has courage enough to let the mind alone, one can find out for oneself how the dimension of silence comes to life in the relaxation of the ego. Silence coming to life is the content of meditation. Silence as a dimension of consciousness is full of life and energy.

You might ask me: 'where does the energy come from?' It does not come from anywhere. The energy which was scattered and dissipated through mental action, comes back to its source when the mind is quiet. Energy which was divided in emotions, sentiments, feelings, thoughts, memories and voluntary reflexes, gathers itself unto itself. The whole day we are dividing energy, dissipating it and scattering it, recklessly. Every movement of the mind implies spending energy. When the mind relaxes, in the cessation of mental activity, energy comes back to its totality. That is life. That is energy. We do not know it today. We are not aware of our own nature. We are not aware of our own essence. We

do not know how to live in totality. But silence coming to life, releases tremendous energy which is not different from intelligence.

On the mental level it was intellect which was functioning and intellect functions indirectly. It has not got the capacity to perceive anything directly. Direct communion with life is beyond the scope of the intellect. Now comes to life intelligence, which enables one to commune directly and simply with everything around and within oneself. That totality of energy then moves without having any desire or motive to obtain anything from outside or from transcendental worlds. It simply moves. That movement of the total energy is love. It may be an experience of all of us, that when one is in love, there is no egocentred activity at all. You do not want something back from the person whom you love. It is not the mind who wants to get related to the person. It is your totality of being. It yearns for getting related. Love is its own fulfilment. Even the opportunity to express love is its own fulfilment. So how can you expect anything back? The ego, the self, the me is non-functioning. It is not non-existent. It is non-functioning. When the whole energy starts moving, one is in the state of love. Not that one is in love with a person, but one is in love with the whole of life. One is in a state of love. Being in that state is its own fulfilment.

I think a person who lives and moves in love is religion in flesh and bone. Then his relationship with others is full of compassion. That is what the world needs today. Our relationships today are full of anger, bitterness, hatred and violence. We are uprooted. We do not know ourselves. We are perhaps not even in love with ourselves. Beyond the mind comes to life a dimension of motivelessness or mindlessness. Beyond the mind comes to life a dimension which enables you to perceive everything in relation to totality to put things in their proper place simultaneously and respond to them in a sane way, in a quiet peaceful way.

We began by saying that though human beings have inhabited the globe for perhaps 2 million years, a totally devel-

oped human being has not yet emerged. He has yet to emerge. I'm not denying the importance or the relative utility of what we have achieved, what man has achieved in the last 2.000 or 10.000 years, no belittling it, only saying that it is not the total, it's only partial, fragmentary. We are not yet at the source of life. The enquiry of the source of life is the beginning of religion. Not an intellectual enquiry, but a personal discovery, a personal discovery not outside oneself, but within oneself, a personal discovery not by borrowed theories and conclusions. It is very easy to borrow theories, conclusions, experiences of other people and then go on vicariously living. But you know, life is never sustained on borrowed enquiries and conclusions. The sustenance of life is direct communion with reality.

Religion is personal discovery of truth. This discovery cannot be made by the mind which has to rely upon the senses. This discovery is not a mental action. If there is any effort at all, it is the effort of letting the mind alone.

The curse of fragmentation is upon us. We have to grow into a new level - a new dimension. I do not know any other word. Every word is loaded with associations of ideas and emotions. You cannot use a word which does not stimulate some association in the minds of the speaker and the listeners. Knowing all the dangers with which it is fraught, I have ventured upon this verbal communication. I am very grateful to you for listening to me with such patience - listening is a participation too. A talk is something which grows between the speaker and the listener. It is the attention of the listener which really shapes the talk. It is not the speaker who gives something out of his brain. If that is the nature of verbal communication, it stinks. It has the odour of the ego of the speaker or the listener.

This is the first meeting and I am very grateful to our host who has graciously received us here and allowed us to go through this communication. Thank you.

Questioner:
Do you think you could take us to that realm of silence and of attention, using your technique?

Vimala:
No. The scope of this communication is to find out what religion is.

Questioner:
You said that one must leave the mind alone. Is not one who makes the decision a part of the ego? The one that you speak of?

Vimala:
Interesting question. When we say that we will allow the mind to be quiet, is that the decision of the ego? If it is not the ego, then what is it? Who is it?

Who or what is it that tells me that I am? Who says this? The opinion making agency, the centre where all the conclusions, opinions, experiences are gathered and stored seems to be different from the awareness of that.

Then you say: I have a mind, I do not understand, who is saying that? Mind is the instrument for understanding. It is our daily experience that one is aware of every movement, mental movement as well as physical movement. One is aware even of the sleep. When you wake up and you say: I have had a profound sleep. Who is it that says this?

There seems to be an untapped, unexplored part of consciousness, which observes what is happening. When one learns that the whole mind is a contrivance, is an instrument, the very awareness of the nature of mind enables us to say that we are not going to use the mind any more.

We are now walking on a slippery ground. In the East and in the West, that untapped, unexplored dimension of consciousness has been defined, described and given names.

It has been called the soul, the spirit, the Atman, the Brahman. It has been given names and the names, the descriptions and the definitions have been given by the mind. So we are not going to get into that trap of giving a name and trying to define what is beyond the mind. We only know that there is a kind of awareness, a dimension of consciousness which can observe every movement of the mind - the egocentre-movement.

There is a dimension of consciousness which does it. The moment you give it a name, cerebral activity begins. It wants to capture it in a form. Name cannot exist without a form, so they try to give it a form also. I say that your names and your descriptions are defective. You say that his description is defective, we start fighting about our Gods and souls. Man has fought so many battles and wars in the name of religion, that one hesitates even to talk about that which is beyond the mind.

Questioner:
You are speaking that we should let the infinite intelligence come in to our consciousness and talk to us. Is that the point you make?

Vimala:
Perhaps yes. But that terminology creates some argument. It may lead to imagining a duality of the individual consciousness and the universal consciousness. What the speaker would like to put across is: This silence of mind helps the totality of our being to grow into a new dimension. In the cessation of mental activity we totally grow into a new dimension of intelligence.

Questioner:
In other words the background created by our mind and the absence of mind is filled with this new substance and growth. It seems to me you are saying that the higher consciousness, the psyche, Atman, is ever present though we do

not seem to recognize it as such. It seems to be making itself known but we have difficulty in identifying it and that in itself is a level of unconsciousness. On a lower level we have the ego which we seem to be able to know. There is a difficulty in drawing the boundary line between the ego and this higher level of consciousness and this seems to be the problem into which so many of us drop - including myself. Where can we be able to distinguish between operation of the psyche, the Atman which is very subtle and the more gross expression of ego? Where is this boundary line?

Vimala:
As long as I identify myself with my thoughts, emotions, sentiments, which is the movement of the ego - the other dimension, the new dimension, is not there. Because I am living through the mind. I live by it. I identify myself with every thought. We live on it and through it.

Allowing the total psyche to be, is to be totally silent. It implies no movement on the part of the ego at all. The cessation of total mental action implies that there is no experiencer left to take an experience of the other dimension and talk about it. It is not a question of higher and lower. All analogies are imperfect and onesided. What I am saying is that total humanity has not totally grown. We have grown up to the mind. We are not mature human beings, hence the violence and the tension. So, allowing the total mind to be silent means allowing ourselves to be silent.

Questioner:
We do not know how to be silent. We do not know how to experience that.

Vimala:
Do you not think madam, that through centuries we have been told and taught to look upon discovery of truth as an acquisition of the mind? I am going to be liberated, I am going to attain this, I am going to attain Nirvana. It has been

always the language of acquisition, possession and ownership.

As long as there is acquisition the ego will exist. The duality of one who acquires and a state which is acquired. Man has explored all the states of the mind. He has gone into the enrichment and refinement of mind and consciousness. It seems that the total psyche which has been explored and mapped out by man is not equal to the task. Do we realize that? Do we look at it this way? When we talk of peace, brotherhood, of one world and God knows what, it cannot be achieved by this. In the silence of the total psyche, man may grow into a new dimension. The very quality of his consciousness will be different. The content of his consciousness will be different. Therefore relationship which is an extension of my essence will radically change. After all what I am, gets reflected in my relationships. So the relationships will change. That is how a new society will come about.

Questioner:

When you are meditating and you get this feeling of unity how do you carry this with you, when you start dealing with the world. How do you deal with yourself?

Vimala:

Very interesting question. When anyone sees that every psychological and cerebral movement is a mechanical movement, then the vanity, the pride, about one's thoughts, theories, ideologies, likes, dislikes and our antagonisms, drops away like the autumn leaves. When one understands the fact that mental movement is a mechanical movement the attachment of mind ceases to be. Understanding is a very explosive thing. It is not an idle thing. It is not knowing about the facts. No! Understanding is a very explosive thing. When you understand either the nature of falsehood or the nature of truth, that very understanding starts operating. It creates a humility.

Humility not as a quality of the mind, not something to be practised, but as a growth, a total growth. You grow into humility when you are dealing with human beings, if something hurts you and you want to react in anger or in bitterness, you see the tide of bitterness coming over you. You see the whole human history behind you and the residue of the whole human experience carried by you. You look at your anger or bitterness as you look at the objective reality.

The subjective reactions getting exposed to your awareness is again an event. How the reaction looses its grip on you when it is exposed to the light of awareness, is something very remarkable, it is a very powerful event if we allow it to take place. So you see the objective challenge and the subjective reaction in one sweep and your response is not from the challenge-reaction-level. You have already taken off to a level of comprehension from where the response will come.

Questioner:
Are you afraid to die? Are you afraid of death?

Vimala:
Are you asking a personal question? What is death? The fear of death, is the fear about the idea of death. Is it not? Man has theorized so much about the fact of death, has talked so much about the fact of death, that the word death is associated with so many emotions. One is not afraid of the fact of death. One is afraid of the idea of death. One is afraid that one will cease to exist. That one will have to leave everything behind.

After all, what is fear? Fear is the reaction of the ego to the prospect of its cessation. As soon as the ego feels that it cannot function, it shivers.

It is very difficult to answer personal questions because they might be misunderstood or misinterpreted. I am so busy living, I am so madly in love with life, so passionately in love with life, that I have no time for indulging in the idea of death. I will see what happens when I am face to face with

it. I have not got a calculated program: for facing death this way or that way. Cultivated bravery is obverted fear.

Second talk, 5.10.68, San Francisco-California

I deem it a privilege to be with you this evening and share with you verbally as far as the medium of words can take us, the concern that I feel about basic problems and challenges, with which we are faced today. It seems to me, that the challenge with which humanity is faced, has many aspects. It is not possible to take all of them in one evening, but we may begin with the fundamental challenges which are self-evident in many countries.

One of the self evident challenges is the state of chronic anxiety in which we find human beings immersed. Even in Europe, America and Great Britain, where people can manage comfortably to clothe and feed their bodies decently, to have a decent shelter over their heads, one does find that something is missing. Individually and collectively people are given to anxiety and nervous tension. People are victims of chronic anxiety. There are many things which accompany anxiety: the tension which in many cases leads to neurosis, depressive psychosis, melancholia, or aggressive escapism. That is one basic aspect of the challenge.

The other aspect of the challenge seems to be: revolt against rationalism. If you see the boys and girls right from the teen-agers up to their thirties or forties, this is the second symptom of some serious malady with which human consciousness seems to be cluttered. The nineteenth century or even the 18th century were called the centuries of reason and rationalism. The second half of this century seems to be the age of revolt against reason.

It is no use condemning the youngsters, saying that these hippies and yippies are drug-addicts or accidents. They are not accidents. They seem to be necessary consequences of a total way of life which we have been following for some centuries. Even in India one comes across the young generation, which is in a blind revolt, in a directionless revolt against rationalism.

We have to find out why there is such a revolt against discipline, rationalism, cleanliness, esthetic sense and against everything. Not only against traditions and code of ethical conduct, but the total way. This seems to me to be the second aspect of the same challenge.

The first is the chronic anxiety with which human beings seem to be suffering, second: a blind revolt against rationalism, and the third: seems to be an acute sense of loneliness. People are living in crowded cities and yet they are lonely. All the liquor in the world and all the sexual indulgence in the world, cannot drown their sense of loneliness. Escaping into the network of religious or transcendental experiences cannot drown the acute and deep sense of loneliness. I may be wrong, but this is my observation about life in the oriental and occidental countries today. I am not oblivious of the political, economic and sociological problems. One cannot miss the tensions in the world: the Vietnams and the Biafras, Jordan, Syria and Israel, or the racial tensions in USA. The tension between Russia and the satellite communist countries around Russia, the tension between Russia and China and so on and so forth. I am not oblivious of these.

But these secondary problems are due to some fundamental malady from which we seem to be suffering. What is missing after having developed science and technology to such a remarkable state; after having discovered the mysteries of the human mind; after having probed into the lanes and bylanes of the subconscious and the unconscious mind; after having taken strides into the occult and the transcendental world? What is missing? Why is human society today in such a miserable plight, living under tension,

anxiety, fear, loneliness and a blind desire to regress into primitive, instinctual behaviour, rather than living sanely and scientifically? There must be something which is missing. One would like to go into it. If it had been a problem of a handful of youths in one country or only the teenagers in ten countries, it would have been a different matter, but this is the current, a very powerful current, through which the whole global human family is passing today.

When human beings were busy developing the mind and the brain, cultivating this very rich and complex instrument at their disposal, they neglected something else. You know, human beings seem to be the consummation of the whole universal evolution. The plants, the birds and the animals have brains and minds. They can think. They can feel. They can will. They can act. But it is only a human being who is selfconscious. He not only can think, but simultaneously he can be aware of what he is thinking, how he is thinking and why he is thinking in a particular manner. He not only can act, but simultaneously can be aware of the motive behind his action, the direction in which the motive is dragging him or pushing him to act. This selfconsciousness seems to be a unique ability with which human animal has emerged.

The second capacity with which he has emerged seems to be the capacity to communicate through symbols. After all, you and I are using words, which are symbols. To create a symbol to communicate what is happening within oneself, what is happening outside oneself, and the interaction between the within and the without is also a unique capacity. All human languages are the flowering of that capacity. As words are symbols, the notes that we use for music are also symbols. The lines, the circles and the shades that are used for painting or sculpture are also symbols. Man has been busy, perhaps thousands of years, refining this capacity to communicate through symbols and also to manifest this ability of selfconsciousness. So on one hand we come across the development of languages, music, art, sculpture a.s.o. and on the other hand one comes across the development

of sciences like psychology, philosophy, metaphysics, religion a.s.o.

It is remarkable how man has been cultivating the cerebral instruments at his disposal. Development and refinement of the biological structure, the refinement and sensitivizing of the psychological structure are the two things with which man has been busy. The animal lives by instinct. His sense of selfpreservation and urge for continuity get expressed through the instinctive action. Man did not want to live by instinct alone. He started developing the brain. Now the use of brain implies two things. One: the timefactor gets involved when one wants to perceive things through the mind. One has to receive the impressions through the senses. The nervous system has got to carry the impressions to the brain and then, according to the conditionings, the pattern of thinking, feeling and willing in which the brain has been brought up, the brain responds. So many intermediaries come between the objective reality and the subjective response of a human being. So pushing aside instinct, and taking up intellect as a medium of getting related to the objective world man had to go through the intermediaries of sense-organs, the braincells and also the timefactor.

Look what happens now! You must have noticed how the capacity of every sense-organ is limited. The capacity to receive an impression is limited. Our ears are capable of receiving atomic explosions of sound. Sound has atoms. Sound and light also have atoms. When we verbalize something and utter a word, it is an explosion of the sound-atom. We are not going to go into the technicalities this evening.

We can see light only to an extent. If it gets brighter than that, we cannot see it. If it gets dimmer than the given unit, then also we cannot perceive it. We can hear only to the pitch and the volume to which our ears have been adjusted. So the capacity is limited. Is it not a valid question to ask ourselves whether we have seen the totality of a fact, or we have seen only a fragment of the fact? We observe through the senses; their capacity is limited; then the nervous system

which carries the sensation, stimulated by the impression, has a limited capacity to contain the vibrations. It cannot carry sensations if they are very intense and very deep. That again is a limitation of the nervous system.

Then comes the third limitation. The brain that interprets the sensations is conditioned by the education, the environment in which it has been brought up. It responds according to that.

It seems to me that the youth of today, or the alert sensitive and awakened man of this century, sees the limitations of these three. He does not want to respond through reason - through the brain. The very limitations of the receptive capacity seem to be creating a revolt. We cannot brush it aside. We will have to face it. We will have to find out if there is any other dimension of perception, or whether man is doomed to have these small units of perception through these limited sense-organs and interpret them through the conditioned brains. Is man doomed to live in the bondage of these limitations? Or is it possible for man to transcend the bondage, the frontiers of all these and grow into another dimension of awareness in which one will not have to perceive fragmentarily or partially, one could perceive totally and respond also not out of the conditioned brain but out of the totality of being.

The revolt that we come across today seems to have these deep roots. The young people may not be aware of this. They may not have the language to express why they are blindly running in so many directions. But when one contemplates about what is happening around oneself, one feels that there are deep-rooted causes.

You cannot avoid the timefactor when you are using mind or brain. You have to refer to memory and then respond. Every action which needs the dimension of time is the soil for breeding anxiety and fear. After all, time is a thing invented by the human mind to arrange collective relationships conveniently. In this land, in America, it will be presumptuous on my part to go into explaining how time is a myth.

Chronologically, what we call time is the result of the positions of the earth and the sun and the revolving of the earth. Time has only relative reality. The yesterdays and todays, the weeks and years are only the convenient symbols which man has created to arrange his collective relationships. I need not go into these simple facts of life. It is a unit of time that we have created as a day. What happens to a man who goes into space and travels? If he goes round the earth 24 times in one day, has he lived 24 days or has he lived one day? How do we count it?

All the measurements that man had invented are collapsing - in religion, culture, ethics, in sociology and in politics. The yardsticks and the measurements, the norms and the standards, the symbols that man had created, are tumbling down and collapsing very fast, science and technology have changed the whole context of life. Even the measurement of time is not relevant today. This discovery of the fact of time, is an explosion of the myth of time. Time was called a dimension of life some few decades ago. Now humanity has arrived at the phase where they have to say that time is a myth created by the human mind. Time does not exist.

It is very interesting to go into this phenomenon of what time is. Is there any continuity in what we call time? Or is what we call a moment only a total and complete eternity condensed before our eyes? Maybe, the concept of continuity also will be challenged. We will find out very soon that there is nothing like continuity in time. That is the 2nd factor. I was saying that while man was busy refining the brain and making it more and more sensitive and rich, he had to use time and he had to use the intermediate instruments. Now he is not satisfied with it, so there is a revolt.

Why is there tension and why is there chronic anxiety? Why is there a sense of loneliness? The study of human life is a very interesting study if we do not do it academically but do it factually. When I work through intellect, intellect has to acquire objective information, what is called data. The scope of information has become so vast today. You

have the newspapers and the journals. You have the television, the wireless and God knows what. So the scope of gathering information in every department of life, in every area of human activity has become so wide! It is an ever increasing, ever growing field of information. The intellect cannot get all the information. It has to be satisfied with the tentative information that it gets and then base its decisions on that information.

We are now aware that there is a possibility of getting much more information. There is a limitation on the information that we can get at every moment and we have to act immediately. So our decisions have to be based on that limited information and an alert sensitive person realizes that he does not know all aspects of a fact.

So even after having taken decisions in life one does not have the sense of self-assurance or self-confidence; one feels a lack of self-confidence. One is not sure about the decision - the propriety, the rightness or the wrongness of the decision. It creates tension.

Instinctive responses were immediate and direct. But they were onesided. Responses through mind and brain, are not narrow and onesided. They can be comprehensive, but the scope of information is getting wider and wider and wider. Thus no human being, living in an industrial civilization seems confident as regards the propriety of his decisions about anything in life. He feels that his neighbour might have more information. His decision may be more well-informed than mine. There is a sense of competition. There is a race. Therefore one likes to relegate decision to organizations which can get more and more information; which can use the computers and have conclusions ready. So we give more and more rights to the organizations and institutions around us. We are even allowing our leisure to be organized by institutions. Entertainment is organized. Religion is organized. Livelihood is organized for us. Everything is organized. When the whole of life is organized, what is left for man? There is no release for his creative energy. He does not know

what to make of his leisure. He does not know how to use the machines. There is the TV-set and he does not know how to use it. He sits there, hour after hour, sits passively absorbing all that the advertisements and commercials are pouring in on him. So it is with music, and even with health-resorts. There is really practically no outlet for the creative energy.

I am not blaming the context that industrial civilization has created for us. I am only submitting with all humility that man has not learned how to use what science has given to him. So he goes on living repetitively day in and day out. Going to the office, doing the job and coming home. Relationship to food is passive. Relationship to the job is passive. There is no outlet for creative energy. Hence human beings get annoyed and irritated. There is a sense of friction within. On the slightest pretex, the annoyance or the irritation comes up. It wells up, surges up and gets expressed in relationship. We are becoming more and more so short-tempered, tense, angry, suspicious, jealous and envious. I do not imply thereby that thousands and thousands of years ago all human beings were angels. I do want to say that man is not keeping pace with the advances of science and technology. He lives in a world where the symbols are not relevant to the context of his life. He lives in a world where everything is organized, where he allows everything to be done for him and then the passivity becomes boredom as he does not know what to do with his time.

The relationships between human beings, in the families and communities is meaningless. We really do not need each other very much. The theory of independance has isolated us. Instead of freedom enriching the relationships, its misuse has isolated human beings. Isolated human beings will always be victims of anxiety.

Look at the paradox. Look at the global schizophrenia. On one hand so much comfort, means of having economic and material prosperity. On the other hand so much tension, fear and anxiety. Why? Unless man finds out the 'why' of these

issues, resolves the tensions and sets himself free of anxiety; unless he is at peace with himself, do what you will, there will be no peace in the world. The concept of worldbrotherhood, the theories of one worldgovernment, the principles of equality and fraternity, the dreams of democracy, all these will be intellectual decorations and not facts in life.

So for creating a new world we have to allow a new human being to be born within us, who will be at peace with himself. To be at peace with oneself, one must know why there is no peace. When man grew from instinct into reason, he had to take refuge in many intermediaries and introduce the dimension of time. Time is a symbol. Time has no reality of its own. We are living in a world where the old symbols are of no use. Man has not found out new symbols. He will have to find out a new dimension of awareness and a new way of communicating with one another; a new dimension of getting related with one another. Then perhaps a new human society could come into existence.

We have to face the problem. We cannot escape into primitive instinctual, impulsive behaviours. We cannot escape into blind directionless revolts. Revolts postpone revolutions. Revolts focus their attention on fragments of a fact. A revolution takes into its comprehensive focus the totality and tries to grow into a radically new dimension.

Today we have only come up to the roots of the malady the nature of the challenges and the causes thereof. Next week we may go into the issue of how one can transcend the mind and the brain, which have the curse of fragmentary perception. Whatever the mind does, perception of totality has been beyond and will be beyond mind. Reality will never be imprisoned in names and forms which are the channels of mental understanding.

I am an utter stranger to your land. The only strength that I have is my anonymity. The speaker has not come here as a teacher or a preacher. I have no claims to be a sannyasi or a yogi, I am just one of you - one of the billions inhabiting this globe. For me spirituality is personal discovery of truth,

growing into a religious awareness is the historical necessity for all of us, individually as well as collectively. One will have to grow into a new dimension and discover a new - a totally new way of life. That concern brings me to your land. Let us understand it very clearly that whatever is communicated verbally is communicated in the spirit of sharing with you and not speaking to you. Love for life is the only urge which takes me from one land to another. So I am really very grateful to Mrs. Armstrong, who has received a stranger and arranged the meeting. I am also thankful to all of you for giving me such a patient hearing.

Third talk, 6.10.68, Palo Alto-California

As we were driving up to this place, I was wondering how many of us are interested in understanding what life is and what the content of living is? Having a human form and existing biologically and psychologically does not necessarily imply that one is living. Existing and living, or vegetating and living seem to be entirely different dimensions of life. But most of us take it for granted that we are living.

Religion for me is a personal firsthand discovery of what life is. Life is movement. Living is moving with the rhythm of the whole life around and within us. Movement needs freedom of the whole entity which is moving. Thus, living, which is moving, makes it necessary that we are free to move in our totality.

Now, what is it to be free and what is it to move? Through the senses we receive impressions of things around us. Through the mind we gather ideas and thoughts which are floating around us. When we meet individuals we react to what they are doing, through our minds, as well as our biological organisms. Is that living? Do we try to find out whether the senses are capable of taking in the total objective reality of a unit of perception at any given moment? When I say I see an object, some impressions are received on the retina, but do my eyes take in the totality of the object which I am perceiving as a unit? Do I see the totality of any object at any time at all? Or is my contact with objective reality through the senses only a partial one?

Man has been hypnotized into feeling that whatever he

receives through the sense-organs and the sensations carried to the brain contain the total objective reality. It seems to me that we are not entitled to believe the senses to such an extent and take it for granted that whatever is received through the senses is the objective reality. We have fallen into the habit of calling it knowledge of objective reality. We have been taught in schools to call things by their separate names, to discriminate them. With every perception certain emotions or certain thoughts have been associated. So we react to them according to our specific education, culture or religious instructions in which we have been brought up. It seems to me that as long as we are passively following the traditions and we do not exert ourselves individually to find out what the content of everything around us is, we cannot enter the dimension of religion.

Human beings living in the 20th century know very well that various countries, various races and various religions have developed patterns of behaviour. They have developed patterns of thinking, patterns of reacting. All these patterns have been fed into the human brain. So a Hindu reacts in a certain way and a Christian will react in another way. A communist will react to the same situation in a still different way. So one will have to question the validity of conforming to patterns of behaviour. Unless one questions the validity thereof I do not think one can be said to enter a religious dimension.

The authority of various patterns of behaviour has become so rigid in the psychological structure that man is not free to move and live. He is so much taken up by that authority. Every word for him has an association of idea and of emotion. Every gesture stimulates certain responses. He attaches so much importance to the authority of these patterns of thinking and reacting that he is not living at all. He is rather passively floating on the ocean of behaviour-patterns created by society. Very few of us really live, we just follow.

One is not saying that these patterns have had no relative utility when they might have come into existence. I would

like only to point out that one cannot move, if one is stuck-up in rigid patterns. Young people today revolt against traditions and patterns and thereby feel that they have become revolutionary. If you only revolt against all the patterns and deny or reject them, a new pattern of rejecting and denying comes into existence. Then you just deny everyhing that you see, you reject everything that you see. Acceptance and rejection are the obverse and the converse of the same quality of mind.

So one has to find out how one will be free to move with life. Can I move with life? Can I get related to human beings around me who are tremendous mysteries? Whose feeling, thinking and reacting changes every minute? So how does one get related to people and to things around oneself? After all, living is getting related to others. We are entities. We are entities of thoughts, emotions, systems of reactions and involuntary reflexes, crystallized and solidified. That is what we are.

If we would like to get related to the socalled objective world and to human beings we must first discover how we can be free to move, to see, to understand and then to act. For discovering that, it seems necessary to recognize the simple fact that as long as we are living and functioning on the mental level we cannot act. We will only react either to the surroundings, or to the memories stored up in our subconscious, or to the residue of collective unconscious stored up in us. As long as we are functioning on the mental level we will be doing either of these three. Either we react to the sensation, awakened bij the impressions, or we react to the memory which is a storehouse of our knowledge and experience. When we are not in touch with the outside world, we are in touch with that inner world. Those memories come to life and make us behave in certain ways. If the conscious and the subconscious are quiet, or are made artificially quiet, then the racial unconscious, hidden deep down, comes to life and we react to the visions and extrasensory or transcendental experiences which are stimulated within us.

As long as one is functioning on the mental level, action is impossible. Only reaction is possible. I wonder if I am succeeding in conveying to you what I would like to convey?

To live on the mental level has been the way for thousands of years. It seems to me that living on the mental plane is not living. It is passively reacting to what society has taught us. It is reacting to the collective experience of humanity which has gone before us. Reaction is not action. Reacting is not living. Then what does one do? I am not getting related to you as long as my mind functions. The moment I look at you my likes and dislikes come up. I react to the clothes that you are wearing. I react to the features that you have, the way you talk and walk, before I could even listen to a word spoken by you. I have judged you according to my norms and standards. Some preference or prejudice has come into existence and is functioning even before you open your mouth to talk to me. This is the first barrier in getting related to you.

Supposing you open your mouh, and speak. Before I could really listen to you, the pitch of the sound, the volume of the sound, the facial expression, the tone in which you are speaking, have created some reaction, emotional or intellectual. That is a barrier again. I never really get into touch with you. The screens of my likes and dislikes, norms and standards, evaluations and conclusions, come in between us. And I look at you from behind those screens.

When you have spoken, every word has also associations of ideas and emotions in my mind. So your words evoke an emotional response before I have grasped the content of what you are saying. Thus we judge each other, even before we have communed with each other. We judge things and human beings the whole day from morning till night. The mind is busy reacting, evaluating, comparing and judging. Looking at one another through such a mind, obviously, is not looking at one another, at all. It is looking at one's own intellectual or emotional creation. It is looking at the images that mind creates. I use you and you use me as the raw

material for constructing images. We are busy constructing images of one another. We have no time for understanding each other. That is why I say that as long as one lives on the mental plane, one is only reacting passively and not acting or living at all. This has become very clear to the whole world.

Give the mind a new ideology, give the brain a new pattern, give the body a new habitpattern, do what you will, as long as we are bound by the whole of human psyche which we have tapped and explored up till now, as long as we are living and functioning through it, there does not seem to be the slightest chance of creating a new world or creating a new texture of relationships.

One has to find out what freedom is. This enquiry into what truth is, what God is or what life is does not begin with you and me. There have been thousands and millions perhaps who have asked these questions to themselves. But even in that enquiry man carried the mind with him and it became another egocentric activity on a very subtle level. So new theories of metaphysics and a transcendental world, descriptions and definitions of God and all that stuff was brought into existence. Everything is chalked out there too. As you have patterns of behaviour in the physical and the psychological - religions and spiritual sects created patterns for the world beyond mind. The mind turns from one to the other and the ambition for acquisition, possession and ownership dominates the socalled spiritual world too. We are not free to move. We are only reacting there too.

The challenge is to brush aside everything that mind has created and find out if there is anything beyond mind at all. If there is any dimension of life in which one could grow, live and move from there, where one will not be victimized by the content of the subconscious or the unconscious? The challenge of freedom is a very serious challenge. It is not revolting against superficial structures and traditions, it is a revolution deep down in the psyche itself.

The time of making adjustments and compromises has

passed long ago. Now is the time of a total revolution, of brushing aside the psychological structure and venturing to find out if there is anything beyond it.

A fundamental psychological revolution in the psyche is the challenge for all of us. Nothing less than that.

So discovery of freedom will need the courage. Only humility has courage; one needs the courage of saying that I really do not know what life is; that I am not going to borrow any theories or any conclusions from anyone, living or dead.

I may read books; I may attend talks; but I will not borrow conclusions or theories from anyone. I will have he humility to find out myself.

The beginning of freedom lies in having the humility to say that one does not know.

I do not know anything about life.

It needs courage to enter the silence of mind.

The temptation to use the mind, the temptation to acquire new experiences through the mind is so strong! That has been the content of life! There is no harm in using the mind in its own limitations, but one cannot find out the content of life through the mind. It is a very unpleasant truth. Man has been defined as a rational animal. He has given tremendous importance to this cerebral activity. Everything done through the brain and the mind has been glorified. The world which lies beyond the brain and the mind remains an utopia for most of us. Awareness that one does not know anything already opens the door to the dimension of silence. It is only well informed minds, clever minds, which start manoeuvring even in the world which is beyond the mind. A humble mind, a modest person, says I do not know. My mind cannot understand it. Nothing is left for me now to do. To arrive at a point when the ego cannot function is the point which is really the springboard on which an enquirer of truth has to stand completely denuded of all the layers of knowledge and experiences. One has to stand in the nakedness of humility.

In that silence, in the total cessation of mental activity, a

new dimension comes to life. It is neither instinct nor intellect. It is the totality of energy, coming back to its source.

Total energy starts functioning.

It starts operating.

We are apt to feel that in the silence of mind there is only negation of action; that there is only emptiness or void. That is how people feel. They would like to know what will happen. They would like to know with the help of the mind what is going to happen after the mind has ceased to function. That is a very big trap.

Let me tell you very plainly that in the realm of silence experiencing has no scope.

Obtaining experiences has no scope in that realm. There is no 'self' or the 'me' to create a rigid centre from which he goes with a motive in one direction, finds out something and brings it back to the centre. These motivations do not exist.

The centre does not exist. It is an awareness without a centre. It is a consciousness without any rigid entity trying to control the frontiers. The only thing that one could say is: all the energy dissipated, scattered through thoughts and emotions, comes back and it is one whole. That which was fragmented comes back to its roots and is one indivisible whole and moves in its totality.

It is the beginning of a free life.

Then if I look at a person I recognize the colour, but the mind emotionally does not react to it. I understand the words, the motive behind the words, but I do not emotionally react to that. I listen to the words, relate them to the totality of that other person's life. I see it in its total context and do the needful.

Formerly I was not free to move, as anger would come up and dictate the response. I would get annoyed and irritation would twist and distort the response. So I was a victim of the subconscious. Now when I have allowed the mind to become quiet, I intelligently understand not only their content, but simultaneously their relation to the totality. I also see the mind reacting, the emotions coming up, I relate it to

the totality of my life, I see all this in one sweep of attention. Both - subjective and objective are comprehended in their totality. So the response comes from a different level of awareness altogether. It is neither conditioned by the subjective, nor by the objective.

Thus a nonsubjective and a nonobjective response comes up from a different dimension of consciousness altogether. Then the image of my husband or my wife that my mind has constructed through various experiences it has had does not dictate the response. What we call freedom or liberation is really liberation from the content of our own minds. What is called freedom is freedom of the frontiers of our own consciousness. Then one can live in the silence of psyche and move in freedom.

To me that is the essence of religion. Then the whole perspective changes. The nature of response changes. Collective relationships, which are merely the extensions of individual life, also change.

It is not easy to talk about truth and freedom through words. One is aware of the limitations of this verbal communication. I have been trying to draw your attention to the fact that man has yet to learn how to live. He has yet to grow into maturity, he is like an unripe fruit today, bitter and sour in parts. Therefore there is so much hatred and violence in the world. There are so many wars. There are so many tensions, collectively and individually. The life that we are living today is really a big mess.

Man has yet to learn how to live. He has to find out that living is moving in freedom. Man is bound by the content of his own knowledge and experiences. He has to find out how to set himself free from the content of his consciousness. No one else can do it for him. He has to launch on an inward journey.

On this inward journey he cannot take the mind with him, because it is the mischiefmaker. It is the creator of all illusions and distortions. So he has to learn how to be silent. He has to learn how to allow the mind to be totally quiet.

That is meditation. It is silence of the total psyche. It is cessation of total mental activiy. This is the psychological revoluton needed today. Unless we are free of our minds, I do not think that religion will come to life. I do not think that a new human society will be created, unless the human being is free.

I am very thankful to the persons who have given us this place for organizing the meeting. I am very thankful to all of you who have been kind enough to come and listen to an ordinary person who does not claim to be a yogi or a sannyassi; who has no claims to any scholarship or erudition; one who feels concerned about the state of affairs in which we are living today. One who feels it as a challenge which must be faced by every individual.

Discussions

Questioner:
I heard that through your search you studied the teachings of Jesus Christ. I wonder where you place Him in a life of truth?

Vimala:
Why should I place Him, sir? What do we mean by placing someone?

Questioner:
I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. To me he is the son of God and he is the way to freedom. I have looked to Buddhism, Hinduism, I have listened to the Maharishi and many others and came to know Jesus Christ as a new way in my life who opened many doors who were closed to my personal self which gave me a lot of humility, which you spoke of this afternoon; the awareness that in myself I was nothing. And

I ask of you if you have studied the teachings of Jesus Christ and if you have, how you place them in your personal life?

Questioner:
Was Jesus Christ just another guru, did he strike you as just another guru or a very learned man who requested the truth just for himself or would you give him any credit as the son of God?

Vimala:
Well, what is son of God? We will have to go into many words and many notions. Yes, I did come across the teachings of Jesus Christ. He seems to be a person who has been ignored in the Christian world. He must have been a remarkable flower of human evolution. He must have been a person who lived directly; who must have been in direct communion with reality.

How can you and I utter the word God? We do not know what God is. Man has tried to imprison God in names and forms. Men fight with each other, for the descriptions and definitions. To me God is the immensity of life. He is all forms and has no form at the same time. He is everything that is existing and nothing at the same time.

The human language can work as far as the realm of duality goes. No human language can describe what God is. He is the unspeakable and the immeasurable. You cannot measure Him with the yardstick of mind. You cannot catch Him in words.

What does the Creator mean to us? We do not know how one blade of grass comes up. We are surrounded by the mysteries of life; yet we are imprisoned in our petty and shallow minds. We want to catch the immense reality and the mystery through the small windows of our knowledge and experiences. One has to step out of the prisonhouse that mind has created and intellect has decorated for us. One has to step out of it and stand exposed to the immense mystery of life. I have not got the audacity to place Jesus of Nazareth

anywhere. Leave it to the scholars. We do not know how Jesus lived. But percolating through so many centuries, the purity of the Sermon on the Mount rings so true! If only the Christian world would turn to His teachings and find out what He really meant, there would be much less misery in the world.

Questioner:
Thank you very much for your answer.

Questioner:
There has been a request for a group meditation.

Vimala:
We do not know what meditation is. We can abstain from speaking and from physical movement. If people would like to sit in silence for some time, we can as well do it. Would you like it?
Someone of the audience: yes.

Vimala:
We will sit in silence for some time. If anyone would like to leave before that, they are welcome to do so.
(Vimala chants the prayer)

Fourth talk, 9.10.68, Redwood City-California

When I arrived here this evening I was having a walk outside in the garden, looking at the colours of the evening-sky and their reflection in the waters of the beautiful swimmingpool. Listening to the fullthroated notes of some birds, I was wondering: why is it that the company of nature, the company of birds, gives our hearts such a joy? It does something to the whole being. A blade of grass, swinging in the air, is a very tiny little thing. How has that blade of grass the power of operating upon the whole of our being? A tiny bird, perched on some branch, giving out a small note makes one happy; why? It seems to me that the blade of grass may be tiny, but it is whole. When it is trembling with the breeze it is the whole being of that tiny little blade, which is operating. When you see a small flower, it is there in its totality.

Life seems to be total movement. Wherever there is fragmentation or partial movement there are sown the seeds of misery, sorrow, and ugliness. Fragmentation seems to be the soil in which sorrow breeds. If you look at the day-to-day life that we are living, it is full of suffering of untold, unnumbered shades and nuances. All that seems to be due to fragmentation of life that our mind creates.

The first fragmentation created by the human mind is: of spiritual life and material life; sensual life and spiritual life; mundane, secular life and the religious life. This division is created by the human mind. Then for the secular and the mundane, the worldly life we create a code of conduct and a pattern of behaviour. And we have another set of values

for the socalled spiritual life. The fragmentation thus develops so. There are many branches into which fragmentation goes on, blossoming out. We go on cutting the universal whole life into small fragments into which we can adapt ourselves. The sets of values created for these various fields become rigid in our psychological structure. One set of values may not be in harmony with the other set of values. So we try the tight-rope circus. We try to be secular and we try to be spiritual. We want to adjust to the political, the economic and the social life. The whole time - day and night - man is busy adjusting to the sets of values and patterns of behaviour created by his own mind. That has become the content of our daily life.

When there is lack of harmony then there is tension. When I try to suppress the tension, it grows into a chronic conflict. When the conflict becomes chronic the personality gets split. There is a contradiction which I carry within me. When the contradiction is managable I try to take care of myself. When the contradiction and the conflict cannot be controlled, managed and regulated by me, I become neurotic. I have many idiosyncrasies. As long as there are only idiosyncrasies which have not become rigid and solidified and with which I have not identified myself, my friends and relatives do not take very serious notice of it. When they become very rigid and start getting edged and sharp, then you are called a person developing a neurosis.

Fragmentation of life becomes a curse. It develops into neurotic trouble. Or there is a complete division between the secular and the spiritual life. One becomes callous, one becomes ambitious. Whenever the conscience starts pricking one runs after some spiritual teacher, master or guide; one tries to find out a way to pacify the conscience which starts pricking every moment. Thus there are hours of prayer and days of meditation. There are days of secular activity and man starts playing multiple roles in life.

It seems to me that this basic fragmentation leads to hypocrisy. That is why man cannot mature. He cannot give out

the beauty of his totality to himself or to others. A tiny bird or a tiny blade of grass or a beautiful flower by the wayside; give out their total beauty. They give out the essence of their life. And somehow we, the human beings, are not emanating the essence of our being. We are playing roles and giving out calculated things to the surroundings.

Religion seems to be the way of living in totality of your being. Religion seems to be the way of being what you are, every moment of life. In whichever situation you may be placed, you are what you are and you are totally there. So a religious person begins to enquire why mind creates fragmentation. The enquiry of truth and reality is not the enquiry of what is beyond, what is beyond death or what is beyond the sensual. The enquiry does not begin there. It begins with what is here and now.

I was wondering if we could go into it this evening. Life is one indivisible whole which cannot be divided into compartments. Compartmentalization of life, fragmentation of one's being is the only barrier in the path of religion.

Why does man have this division and fragmentation? When the human life must have begun on this globe, some millions of years ago, man had to discover himself and find out what he was. He was trying to discover the meaning of life around him. He was trying to understand himself. First his contact must have been with the senses and the senses coming into touch with the stone, the water, the air, the sun, the moon, the light, the darkness, the softness and the hardness. He was coming into touch with reality through the senses. He thought that whatever the senses perceived was the total perception.

So maybe in the beginning he was so much absorbed by the sensual world that some period of human history might have been taken up by the experiences received through the senses. Man might have tried to go through the experiences of pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, derived from this sensual contact. There is a beauty in it when you feel the softness or the hardness of a thing, if you can really feel it.

If you are there to feel it. In affluent society minds generally become culturally very poor. They lose contact with objects and things. They lose contact with nature around them. They are taken up by money, physical comfort, the merciless economic competition and by the standards of social respectability. Perhaps man has no time even to look at the beauty of his own car. He has no time to touch, see and feel the beauty of it. Things do not remain companions for most of us. There may be exceptions. But in an affluent society things do not remain companions. They become things to be used by us. They become means of deriving pleasure and avoiding pain. They lose the respectability of companionship. But in the beginning everything must have been a companion of man. And he must have been busy having the pleasure of the taste, the sound, the vibrations of sound and in the process of growing and maturing.

As man has been endowed from the very beginning with the capacity of selfconsciousness and intelligence, he could see that sensual pleasures were limited by the limited capacity of the senses themselves. You may enjoy a very delicious meal, but there is a limit to the quantity that you can take in. There is a limit to the flavours and tastes and spices that you can take in. You may go on repeating eating delicious meals, day after day, but the day comes when the mind of an intelligent and sensitive person becomes satiated. Man is never willing to be bound by any frontiers.

The quest of religion is the quest of transcending all manner of barriers. So from the sensual, man turns to the psychological. The pleasure that the thought gives, the emotion that an idea can awaken, the joy or the sorrow that the emotion can give, last much longer than the sensual pleasure. Man went after the capacity of thinking like a starving hungry man running after food. All the sciences, physiology and philosophy and theology and social sciences came into existence. Art, sculpture and literature came into existence. Man has been playing with this capacity for centuries bygone. There might have been periods of collective intox-

ication when new ideas were discovered and new avenues of emotional responses were found out. Intoxication that metaphysics can evoke is something tremendous. A thought is much more intoxicating than any alcohol in the world. The effect of the alcohol may need some hours to subside; but the intoxication of thoughts, ideas and ideologies, goes on for generations.

An intelligent and sensitive person finds out very soon that this business of approximating our lives to ideas creates an additional duality. In the sensual world we have the duality of the objective and the subjective. In the psychological world we have the duality of an idea and the fact.

I understand what the fact of my existence is, I know what I am and I think every person whether he likes to confess it to himself and to share it with others or not, is capable of finding out who he is. He knows what he is: the ugliness, the beauty, the cruelties, affection and violence. We seem to be an amalgamation of all these tendencies, passions and drives. Man does know it. Now he has a set of ideals with which he wants to approximate his life. So he runs after that.

Instead of trying to find out what envy is and how it comes into existence, man starts running after the ideal of non-envy. In running after ideals, in trying to project them in the state of non-envy there are two dangers: One may try to suppress the fact within, and not understand it nor get it resolved. One may try to suppress it on one hand and thus pretend to be what one is not. One tries to imagine, project or to hypnotize oneself. After all an idealist is one who goes through the process of selfhypnosis.

Thus on one hand there comes about the force of suppression and on the other hand the struggle to approximate our movements to our ideals, brings about hypocrisy or self-hypnosis. We have come from the sensual to the psychological, but the duality, the tension, the conflict, and the contradiction is still there. The contradiction becomes more acute in the psychological world because there is more scope for hypocrisy in the psychological realm than in the sensual

realm. You cannot hide much in the sensual world. When you are hungry you eat. You cannot suppress your appetite and pretend not to be hungry. But you may have lust simmering within your heart and outwardly you may pretend to be completely free of it. There is more scope for hypocrisy in the psychological realm of ideas, thoughts and emotions than in the realm of sensual pleasure. So we find more hypocrites and more neurotic persons in the socalled sphere of religion and spirituality than in the gross sensual, materialist sphere.

Then one asks oneself: what next? If the world of thought and emotion also creates fragmentation, contradiction and conflict, what does one do?

We are passing today through very dangerous decades of human life. And on the other hand a very romantic period also as man has exhausted all the avenues of intellectual and psychological realms. He has come to the end of it and he wants to find out an new way of living in which he could live as a total human being, where he will not have to pretend anything. Where he will be able to perceive directly and respond totally. That seems to be the quest today.

We have taken now on our canvas nearly the growth of two million years in a very short time and in a very general way. We could not go into all the details. The study of human evolution in the East and in the West; a comparative study, of all the races growing together and passing through the ages of sensuality and the centuries of psychological identification is something very thrilling.

Even in the political, economic and sociological fields man is tired of ideologies. Man is really getting bored with the talk of new ideas and new ideals. He wants transformation in the content of life. He does not want new ideals to be paraded on the shores of his consciousness. He does not want it. And after the invention of the electronic brains where memory can be transferred even to machines, where machines can be taught not only repetitive but reproductive actions, where machines can be taught to speak; man wants to find out if

there is anything creative left for him to do.

Is he doomed to live with these machines which have now taken over even the work of his memory? Is he going to live with them on the same level or is he going to transcend that level? What is beyond the mind - the brain? Is there only a void and an emptiness? Is there only a speculating game or is there any solid reality? I think the global human family has arrived at this point.

Let it be very clear to us that fragmentation will be upon us as long as mind is functioning. When I have to touch the chair the mind tells me: this is a chair. The sensation is received and the brain interprets it. There is not much danger in calling a chair a chair. Of course there is a danger if one takes it to be absolute reality. A chair is not really real. A chair is a myth. It is a piece of wood out of which man wants to create something for his use. He shaped the chair in his mind and gave the wood that shape. So wood is the reality. The table is a myth. It is a fiction. A fiction or myth is something which has relative reality. Truth is something which has absolute reality. A table or a chair, the door or the wall, are all creations of the human mind for the convenience of his existence. They are not real in the ultimate sense of the word. But even then my brain tells me that this is a chair. That is a door. That is a wall. It is something that is static, it is not moving, it is not dynamic.

Again, here too one has to be very cautious. Physics and the experts, the scientists will tell you that every atom, electron, proton is really moving. There is a quantum of energy which is enveloped in a form. The walls and the doors are also energies, in so many forms. I am not going into those painful details. It is very interesting to study the latest discoveries of physics. What they talk of matter, how it is convertible into energy; how the minutest atom contains infinite energy.

It is a tremendous century to live in. The discoveries that man has made in every science, whether biology or medicine, physics, or technology are fantastic.

Now man has found out that brain is a machine and thinking is a mechanistic process. Surely no sensitive person, no alert person of this century will feel proud of his thoughts and his values. They are social conveniences, created by different communities and conditioned by climate, food and the nature of occupation. But they are social conveniences. Man knows that. Even names are social conveniences. Vimala or Joan, have no reality. Names are given by the parents to discriminate one entity from another, as the chair from the table and the door from the wall. When we identify ourselves with those tiny entities called Robert or Harry the machine starts working.

I may be born in a Hindu community and the pattern of behaviour fed into my brain may be different from the pattern of behaviour fed into your brain. So the responses, voluntary and involuntary may be different. There is no superiority or inferiority, there is only variety. A person who knows that even the entity called the me, the ego, is a social convenience created by the community to discriminate one entity from the other and movement of mind is a mechanistic movement, grows into humility. Thinking and feeling and reacting is nothing original but is a collective product. When man sees this there is an explosion within him. Seeing has a tremendous potentiality.

Then the psychological walls of ideologies, race-consciousness, the sense of belonging to some nation, to some class, drop away. It seems to me that the whole humanity is standing on the threshold of true religion. Religion not as an idea in the brain, but as a way of life.

Mind cannot function without refering to the past, to the known. When mind receives any sensation or impression it cannot interpret it without refering to the past which is the memory, the knowledge, the experience. The experiences of different communities are different. As long as I identify myself with the pattern of experience that I have and you identify yourself with the pattern that you have, there will be conflict. Supposing both of us realize that these patterns

do not belong to us, that we are not those patterns; then obviously all the fights, the wars, that are waged today in the name of ideologies and of religions will become unwarranted.

What is going on in Czecho-Slovakia and Russia today? Why is Russia pressing the Czecho-Slovakian leaders and making them sign treaties? Why? They are not allowing them even to have a federation of the Slovaks and the Czechs. Why? Communists have become as fanatic and dogmatic as the orthodox religious people. Whether the orthodox religious are Catholics, Hindus or Buddhists, they are dogmatic. Religion was the opium when Marx wrote his book. Today Communism or Marxism have become equally an opium. They are fighting. There is tension between China and Russia, why? Not for Communism and Marxism, but for their ambitions. Whether China will lead the Communist world or Russia will lead it.

So, as long as we identify ourselves with patterns of ideas, ideologies and behaviour, judging other people on their basis, do what we will, we will not have peace in the collective life and also not in the individual life. It is impossible to be on the mental level and not respond on the basis of images. Mind is really an image-making machinery. It is a kind of factory, it goes on creating images the whole day. It goes on judging people the whole day. So mind cannot respond without refering to the past, to the known. Refering to the past and responding on the basis of that, does not give you a feeling of creative action. You are repeating or projecting your previous experience and your conclusions. You are imposing your image on the reality of the person.

I wonder how many of us know what an ordeal it is to get related to another person. We do not know what it is to be in relationship. We are so selfcentred, we are so busy with image-making and deducing conclusions, that we have no time to look at another person or to get related to the other person. All our socalled relationships in family and society are just adjustments with one another's resistances. If you

resist me on one point, I try to dodge that point and get at you at another point, I do not try to understand why you are resisting, I have no time for that. Thus we have really no relationships with one another. We are related to other minds and the egocentred activity of creating images. We are related with the images that we have created. Whenever the images shatter, collapse or tumble down, we are frustrated. Then we turn away.

Whatever one does on the mental level is bound to lead to misery and sorrow. It is bound to keep one oscillating between success and frustration, joy and sorrow, pain and pleasure. It is like being on a swing, if the swing goes in one direction it is pleasure, if it goes in the other it is pain.

With static things the mind can deal. With dynamic phenomena like a human being, mind cannot get related. Therefore mind cannot understand what life is, which is moving every day. The context of life is changing every day.

I find it very fascinating to live in this century when every day the colours, the shades of the challenges are changing. It is a very thrilling century to live in. All the old symbols, ideals and ideologies are collapsing. We are standing on the threshold, anxious to break new paths. The younger generation is running in all directions. Right from the drugs, and chanting the mantras, to revolts in Paris and Frankfurt. They are running in all directions. They do not know what to do. Limitations of sensual pleasure and inner contradictions of psychological living have exhausted the patience. Something new is in the offing. This seems to be a century of revolution. And the revolution that we are going to have now seems to be a total psychological revolution.

When we realize that man cannot live and function through the mind which is capable of dealing with static phenomena, and which is simply incapable by its very nature of getting related to anything dynamic we become humble. You know what relationship is? It is getting related to the totality of another person, who is ever changing. I must have a fresh glance and the innocence to look at you and find out what you are,

rather than try to judge you on the basis of what has happened the previous night. Innocence is necessary to understand individuals around us as well as the whole context of life which is changing very fast. So when we realize that mind is not the right instrument, that it will not enable us to understand what life is we become silent. Religion is personal discovery of the meaning of life. Religion is not adopting a dogma, offering lipservice to certain patterns of behaviour. Religion is not vicariously borrowing experiences of others and imagining that we have them. Religion is a firsthand discovery of the meaning of life as it goes on moving every moment. It is to move with life and understand what life implies. There is a beauty in that movement. Thousands of years we have been living in the decorated cage of psychological structure created by the ego, the self or the me. One is reluctant to leave that structure unless this mind is assure that there will be another structure to live in. Look at the game of the mind: it wants to have a blueprint, it wants to have a structure ready where it can turn from this and plunge into the other. Now the beauty of life is: it cannot have a structure. It cannot have a set pattern. Everything is changing and moving. One has to understand the nature of constant flux, that life is.

Up till now we have followed the way of identification. Now one has to learn the art of non-identifying, of understanding everything and of living through every experience thoroughly. One has to learn the art of walking through all these without getting stuck-up anywhere. Then only one could move with life. So without denying or suppressing the mind, without trying to discipline or control it, one has to realize the limitations of mental activity, the mechanistic nature of mental action and the frontiers of mental activity. The content of our knowledge and experience is the frontier of our consciousness. Mind cannot transcend those frontiers. When one realizes this and when the consciousness or the awareness has been stripped of all the vanity that one has had of one's thoughts, norms and values; when one is

denuded completely of these psychological layers, then one is in the dimension of humility to enquire what is beyond.

I do not imply hereby that one should neglect the sensual world or the psychological world. Not turning away from the beauty of the senses or the impressions that they bring us, the complexity of the nervous system and every sensation; the uniqueness of every sensation; the bio-chemical effect of every thought on us. We should be aware of all that beauty. To me, life is a whole. So relationship with the sensual and the psychological world must be a scientific one. We cannot neglect it.

I remember another story: two Americans went to Japan and I know these friends of mine who went to Japan. They had come to India and after spending some months in India they went to a Zen-school in Tokyo. They found that the Zen-Masters were working in the monastery cutting wood, cooking the meals, washing the dishes, doing everything. So after a few days they were puzzled. They had gone to learn and here were the Zen-Masters doing exactly what they were doing! So one day one of them asked the Master 'Sir, we have come to learn from you, but we do not see any difference in what you are doing and the way we are living'.

The Master said: 'There is a difference: when I eat, I eat and you do not. When I sleep I sleep and you do not. When I eat I am totally present. When you eat you are worried. You brood. You think about hundred-and-one things. You put the morsel of food into your mouth automatically. Mechanically you chew it. But you are not related to it. You are not there. You are not present with the food'. All our actions are partial and fragmentary as long as we function on the mental level. He said: when I sleep I sleep, I sleep profoundly. When you sleep, half of the time you are dreaming. So you are again on the mental level. You do not sleep. Half of the time you are dreaming, when you are awake you try to interpret the dream. You see how we live on the mental level and how deep the fragmentation has gone! Not only does it pollute the waking hours but this fragmentation involved in mental

action pollutes and contaminates the quality of sleep which is the nectar of life.

We violate the modesty of that delicate instrument when we misuse speech. It is a gift, to create the symbol. But we misuse speech so much! When it is not necessary to speak and communicate, why should we gossip? But we do. We use words not to express what we feel, but many times to hide what we feel.

Every misuse of the physical and psychological organism adds to our misery and sorrow. And therefore the foundation of religious life is a scientific relationship with the body and the mind. One who indulges in sensual pleasures has no respect for his physical organism. One who tries to impose unwarranted, unscientific austerities on the body has also no respect for the physical organism. Austerity and indulgence are obverse and converse of the same quality of mind, there is no difference. The foundation of religion is a scientific relationship with the body and the mind.

I do not know if you have heard any speaker who comes to you in a friendly way. Who has no claims to anything special or extraordinary. We met here this evening, at least as far as the speaker is concerned, in a very friendly way to converse. The speaker began with saying that when you look around nature, whether you look at a blade of grass or flower or listen to a bird, it gives you immense joy. It gives you a kind of joy which is not a sensation, but which gives you peace and a kind of bliss which transcends all sensations. When you are in the company of oceans and woods and skies, they do something to you. Everything in nature gives out its essence and wholeness, but we the human beings somehow seem to carry the curse of fragmentation.

So we went on to find out where and how the fragmentation begins. We saw the limitations of the sense-organs.

Unless you walk across the known, you cannot arrive at the unknown. Understanding of the bondage opens the door of the unknown. The opening of the doors or the gates of the unknown does not need an independent effort. The effort

which is necessary is the effort of understanding the known.

Listening with attention is as much creative activity as speaking. Listening is an activity, it is a participation on the part of the speaker and the listener. These talks are like flowers which blossom in the communion between the speaker and the listener. They do not belong to the speaker at all. That is the beauty. I for one listen to the talks as attentively as you might be doing.

Discussions

Questioner:
Is what the younger generation is doing - is that the result of what the elders have done to their lives? Is this installed into them like discrimination, even at a very early age by the adults or is this a tendency that the young have? To want to conform to standards of what the elders have done to their lives?

Vimala:
I think that is what they see their elders doing with their lives. We, the parents and the teachers create an atmosphere where conforming to social norms is regarded as something respectable. This poison of conformity and accepting authority is transmitted to their lives, even when they are small kids.

Questioner:
You understand the known while just observing? Being aware? Or is it an intellectual study?

Vimala:
There are two ways of getting related to the known. One is through knowledge and the other is through understanding.

Knowing the ideas first and looking at the facts in the light of those ideas is the way of knowledge.

The other way is: of understanding directly by observing what is happening within me. A person may not read the books on psychology at all. But he watches what is happening to him. Understanding is direct; whereas knowledge is indirect.

Questioner:
You sense what is going on within you, but you do not understand it. That is where you get back to the books again. There are things happening within you, which you are observing without understanding them. And then for your knowledge you are forced back to books again.

Vimala:
Will not you distinguish between knowing about a thing and understanding? Understanding refers to the nature of the movement. Knowing about it refers to the analysis and evaluations that have been given to the phenomenon. These two are quite distinct. Are not they? When you say that there are some sensations which one does not understand. Understanding is not necessarily giving it a name. Understanding is not recognizing it according to the categories of the academicians. Understanding is in relation to my factual life. What it does to the body, to the mind and to my total being. We are loosing this art of directly communing with our bodies and minds. We are getting into relationship through the books. It is a secondhand relationship. No religion can come into existence as long as there is this vicarious, secondhand relationship.

What happens when one is in love? One cannot define it. Love is not a sensation. It is not a feeling. It is not merely an attraction, it goes very deep. If anyone asks you to describe what is happening to you when you are in love, you cannot describe it. You will not be able to give it a name. But you do understand what is happening to you, do not

you? You may not be able to communicate it in words to others. You may not be able to do it, because love is something which is happening to your totality. Words are related to indicate something which is taking place in fragments, in parts. In the same way, when you stand on the shore of an ocean and you see the tides coming and washing your feet, the colours of the setting sun on the waters, it does something to you. Now if someone asks you what is happening to you, you will just look around. You will not be able to speak at that moment. After one minute you will say: 'you asked me what was happening, I could not tell you'.

Wherever totality comes into function the human language which is related to fragments, is not able to express it. Understanding of what is happening within oneself may not enable you to communicate it into words. But understanding changes the quality of your whole behaviour.

Fifth talk, 11.10.68, San Francisco-California

I do not know what you would expect of me and what is the information that you have received about these meetings. As far as I am concerned, these meetings are occasions for verbal communication about things which are important for every individual. There is no intention of converting anyone to any specific point of view, because I have none.

One is not used to such friendly communication about spiritual matters. Spirituality, religion and communications concerning them have been up till now conditioned by a certain tradition. A person who has transcended the frontiers of time and space, a person who has transcended all the barriers of mind and brain and who lives in the realm of the unspeakable, in the realm of the immeasurable, comes and speaks to the people, but people have created a psychological pedestal for such a person. They regard him superior to them.

They look upon him as a superhuman being and create a gap between the person and themselves. Not only a gap, but they also create a distance, temporal distance as well as distance in space. Hence it is very difficult to communicate about the beauty of truth and reality. There is nothing mysterious about truth and beauty. There is nothing mystical about freedom and liberation. They are as simple as the flowers nodding their heads on a gentle breeze. It is something as simple as a fountain of water.

The atmosphere of mysticism, of something supernatural and superhuman, in which this realization of truth has been

enveloped, must be broken through first, before we can communicate. Persons coming from the East do create such an atmosphere by a different way of living, a different way of clothing and labelling themselves as sanyasis, yogis or monks and what not. He creates a feeling that spirituality is something for the chosen few and not for the majority. That it needs an absolutely different way of life. I would like, if I may, to suggest in the very beginning that there is no such nonsense about truth of life.

It is neither necessary to retire from life to find out what the truth is, nor is it necessary to run away from the responsibilities and the duties that life brings our way. It is not a speculative game. It is not an emotional adventure. It is not a strategy of isolation. It is something very simple, vibrating in every moment and movement of life. The matters that I have come to share with you, the people of California, are not intellectual decorations for me. They are as vital as my life-blood.

Truth cannot be poured into words. Words are very feeble. They are not equal to the task of communicating what is vibrating in silence. Yet we will try to find out in as simple words as possible. Words which are not heavily loaded by the association of Hinduism, Vedanta, Yoga, or Islam, Sufism, Buddhism or Theosophy. Not by any 'ism' which may be fashionable in the world of the intellectuals today.

How do we live? We have tried to live enjoying the sensual pleasure; it does not satisfy us. We have tried to intoxicate our minds and brains with various thoughts. We have tried various avenues of different traditions, conditionings and patterns of getting related to one another and we find that all these leave an acute discontent and a feeling of loneliness lurking behind.

If you look within, you will find that there is a kind of loneliness. There is a kind of discontent. You have the clothes, food and the house. You have a car, you are surrounded by so-called friends - friendship is a very difficult thing - and yet you are lonely. You are dissatisfied. There is a kind of

discontent which cannot be located, you cannot put your finger on it and say that this is the thing that dissatisfies me or that is the reason why I feel lonely.

We will not be able to describe or define it and yet it is there. Why? It seems to me that this dissatisfaction and loneliness is caused by an urge for truth and beauty, an urge for freedom. Every human being seems to be born with an urge for freedom. He wants to be free from all the shortcomings of his inner life as well as of the society around him. He wants to be in society and yet free of it. He wants to live with the reality of what he is biologically and psychologically and yet not be bound by it. That urge for transcending all bondage and all barriers, seems to be immanent in every human heart.

We may stifle the voice of that urge. We may try to suppress it and yet, when we are alone, relaxing, wandering in the woods, or travelling in a car, that voice again whispers into your ear: 'what about the urge for freedom?' Unless one is free, one will never be at peace with oneself, do what you will. You may surround yourself with the best written books of philosophers and theologians. You many wander all over the earth visiting beautiful healthresorts. You may have beauty of the body, sharpness of the intellect and sensitivity of the mind. And yet, unless you are free totally you will not be happy. Unless you can live and move in freedom, you as a human being, will not be happy. You will not be at peace with yourself. One who is not at peace with himself cannot emanate peace around him.

If you are at peace with yourself every difficulty becomes an opportunity to express the peace within. If you are not at peace within yourself, every opportunity becomes a difficulty. It gets converted into a difficulty. If you are at peace with yourself every challenge becomes an opportunity to probe into the depth of your being and to explore your inner life. If you are not at peace with yourself every challenge is converted into the ugliness of a problem.

Problems are not facts of life. A problem is a reaction

created by the mind to the challenge of life. A problem is not a reality at all. When the mind is not capable of responding to a challenge, is not capable of meeting the challenge totally, it converts the challenge, the simplicity, the beauty of the challenge, into a problem - the ugliness of complication. What is ugliness? Complication. Complexity is ugliness. Simplicity is beauty. I am not asserting anything.

For me, simplicity of perception, comprehension and response is beauty. Totality is expressed only through simplicity. Complications - complexity, is fragmentation of that totality. Fragmentation is ugliness. There is no other ugliness in life.

One cannot be happy and at peace with oneself unless one is free. Only in freedom can simplicity come to life. Only in freedom can truth breathe. Let us go into this question. Let us find out if our inner life can receive the flood of truth as this room is flooded with the sunshine.

A few minutes ago it was clouded. And now it is flooded with sunshine. Everything changes, even the perspective and the quality of perception changes. The things do not change. They are the same. They were there ten minutes ago. And yet when the room is flooded with the piercing rays of the sun, the very quality of perception changes without your knowing. You do not have to make an effort to change the quality. It gets changed by itself. In the same way, when the whole psyche is flooded with the light of truth and beauty, the perception and its quality changes immediately.

Let us now find out how one can be free, how one can arrive at that dimension of freedom. In the East as well as in the West meditation has been regarded as the way to freedom. The word meditation is greatly misunderstood and misinterpreted. Meditation is a way of life. But before we find out what meditation is let us take into consideration what it is confounded with.

It is confounded with concentration. Concentration and meditation are diametrically opposed things to each other. Concentration is focussing your attention on some point to

the exclusion of everything else. You can concentrate upon individuals, living of dead, on virtues which are attributes of the mind. You can concentrate upon the concepts of gods and the images created by man. Look at the vanity of man. He tried to create the image of God. He was created in the image of God. Now he wants to create God. All the temples created by human mind and brain are the exhibitions of man's vanity to capture God into name and form.

God is beyond all that. I come from the country where around every corner there is either a temple or a mosque. Either you concentrate upon the concept and the image of God, created by the human mind or you concentrate upon some individual whom you accept as your master, or guru, or you concentrate upon some idea.

Now when you try to focus your attention you want to exclude it from the rest of life. Pupils who want to concentrate complain to their teacher: 'that the mind was distracted'. What is distraction? Distraction is: attention refusing to be focussed exclusively on one point. Attention wanting to embrace the whole of life. We try to focus it on one point to the exclusion of everything else.

Meditation is not an exclusive activity of the mind. It is not an act of the will at all. It is a state of total being. It is a dimension of consciousness. Concentration is an act of mind, a mental activity, an act of the will. Meditation is a state of your growth. It is a state of total growth. It is a dimension of consciousness. Once you grow into it, there is no coming back into the former state at all. You do not have to be on your guard. When a girl grows into a beautiful young woman, she is not afraid that she will regress back into childhood. She is that. In the same way, meditation is a state of total being in which one is free. We will come to the content of freedom later on. But we must distinguish concentration from meditation.

Concentration has its utility in life. It has its value in life also. If children were not helped to learn what concentration is, they would never learn what technology and science is.

You need the art of concentration if you want to learn engineering and if you want to send a rocket to the moon or if a person is to work with a computer. Concentration sharpens the brain. It vitalizes memory. It brings to the surface all the hidden latent talents and powers of mind. We do not use all the powers of the mind when we live on the surface-consciousness.

There are tremendous powers in the mind as there are in the body. We are not using all the powers of our body - the glandular and the muscular energy that is at our disposal. We are perhaps using one tenth or one hundredth of it. One who learns yoga, uses every gland, every muscle, every nerve. He knows how to take the utmost out of it. In the same way, one who learns the art of concentration, enriches the powers of the mind. That is how powers like clairaudience, clairvoyance, reading the thoughts of others and feats of memory like attending to hundreds of things at the same time, come up. It is easy to develop these powers by practising concentration. It is easy to develop all hidden powers of the subconscious and unconscious. It is easy to stimulate the unconscious and make it project the visions and transcendental experiences. It can be done through concentration. But it has nothing to do with spirituality. It has nothing to do whatsoever with meditation.

I would like to emphasize very much in the beginning that concentration is not meditation. People who developed such powers may not be free of anger when they come out of their concentration. When they come out of their so-called retreat you will find that the quality of their consciousness and the texture of their relationships are not transformed. They are just the same. Practising concentration merely heightens the sensitivity of the mind. It widens the horizons and the scope of experiencing. Now you are experiencing in the outer world and with concentration you start experiencing the content of the inner world. It is an adventure in experiencing. But still the ego is there. The self, the me is there, taking the experience of vision, indulging in the

experiences of the transcendental world. Whether you increase the power and heighten the sensitivity through taking drugs as many of the young people are doing in this country, or you do it by creating certain soundvibrations, chanting certain mantras, the mechanism is the same! Whether it is socalled secular experience or transcendental experience, the urge to experience is the mischief of the ego. It has nothing to do with religion at all. Religion is melting away of ego. Religion is exploding the myth of the ego as an independent entity.

Then what is meditation? Meditation is a dimension of growth - a dimension of awareness. How does one proceed? How does one grow into that dimension? If concentration is not the way, as is apparent, then what is the way?

First, let us look upon the body as an evil thing. In the East people think that the body is a barrier; that senses are the barriers. Either you indulge in them or you deny the existence of the senses. You deny the pleasure, the joy to the senses. These are two extremes between which the world is oscillating today. Either the way of becoming a victim of the sensual pleasures or denying the pleasures of the senses altogether. Both the ways indicate that we do not have reverence for the physical organism that we have. It is a beautiful thing - this human body, black, brown or fair, tall or short, fat, slim or slender. Look at the human body - the whole organism, the complexity and the richness of the whole system. It is our companion. Call it our instrument or call it our companion, it is there. Let us get acquanted with it.

Meditation as an all-inclusive attention has to begin with the reality of your physical and the psychological structure. So one must get acquainted with it, one must get friendly with it. If you are friendly with the body, the body cooperates with you. It is an adventure to discover how my body can live in poise and relaxation. Unless you get acquainted and friendly with the physical organism, meditation as a total way of life can never be arrived at.

Those who are creating a cult of sex and those who are creating a cult of sensual pleasure, are insulting the total life as much as those who are denying everything, denying sex and denying sensual pleasure. They are violating the holiness or the sanctity of total life. Meditation is a way of life. I said it is a total way. It is a total growth. Simplicity and austerity need not be ugly. Austerity has is own beauty. Simplicity is never ugly. How can a person living in simplicity be shabbily dressed? How can he insult his person by wearing rags on his body?

I am not referring to the humanity which is living in starvation and poverty in the world. That is a different problem. How to meet that and how to eliminate the starvation, is a different problem. In the West, no one need live that ugly way, but they are doing it. They are doing it in the name of revolt against civilization. It makes no sense.

Then acquaintance with the psychological organism is necessary. We are giving too much importance to mind, only because we are not acquainted with it.

We do not know the anatomy of mind; how thoughts are born. Perhaps we have not gone into it. When does a thought get clothed into words? How does an emotion awaken? What happens chemically to the whole of body and mind when an emotion is stimulated? What is an involuntary reflex? We have not gone into it. We go into the intricacies of science and technology. But nobody takes an inward journey to find out what the mind is and how it functions. Is there anything like the unconscious? How does it function? We either leave it to the religious priests or to the psycho-analysts and the psychiatrists.

It seems to me that every person who has to function through the mind has the responsibility of getting acquainted with the mind. You will not allow me to drive your car, unless I know how to run it. And yet we want to drive the mind and brain and make it function without knowing what a thought is; what an emotion is. We pay lots of money to the psycho-analyst and the psychiatrist to tell us all about our

minds. Or we go to a priest to confess. Why should it be necessary?

I think the 20th century man is mature enough to understand the mechanism of his own mind and get a proper, sane and healthy relationship with it. You have a relationship with your car or with your T.V.-set. In the same way one must have an acquaintance and friendship with what is called mind. The 19th century psychologists and psychoanalysts of the 20th century are creating a god out of mind. They are creating an atmosphere of mystery around the mind. They make ordinary persons like you and me feel as if we cannot handle our own minds. That is the privilege again of the chosen few. Now the days of the priest are gone and the days of the psychiatrists and the psychologists are gone.

If we want to be free of mind, we must know what the mind is. We may read a hundred books, but unless we watch and observe the movement of mind within us, from moment to moment, we will never understand what the mind is. I may read Freud, I may read Jung and Adler. I may know all the theories by heart. But when anger comes up, I lose my temper and utter words which I would be embarrassed and ashamed to utter otherwise. I am annoyed, I become a victim of that irritation and I behave in a way which would otherwise make me feel ashamed. Becoming victims of momentary emotions is below the selfrespect of any mature human being.

The religious enquiry must begin with a firsthand investigation of our own mind. A thought comes up as a reaction either to the outer world or to the memory which is the inner world. Thought is not action by itself. A thought or an emotion which are reactions, come up when you are busy with the outer or with the inner world which is your memory. You may be dreaming about the future. But the dreams of the future are only extensions of the past. They are projections of the past. Our concept of the future in time, is nothing but an extension of what we call the past.

Thoughts and emotions come up as reactions. They are not actions. Thoughts or emotions come up when you are getting related through the mind. The beauty of the present moment and what it is manifesting is pushed to the background. The idea of having it again captures your mind. It drags you to the psychological time of tomorrow and makes you plan. All this is called thinking, which is a reaction.

One can find out for onseself how every thought and emotion is a reaction and not action. The patterns of reactions are determined by the society in which we are born and brought up. You cannot avoid the variety of these patterns of conditioning. You cannot say that the whole of humanity must be regimented to one pattern. It cannot be done. The communists are trying their level best to do it. They are learning a lesson from the Czecho-Slovaks. They may stifle the voices of Dubcek and Svoboda, but what the Czecho-Slovaks have stood for in the communist block, standing head erect to speak for freedom cannot be destroyed. Dubcek can be killed, Svoboda can be hanged. Freedom can never be hanged or stifled.

There will be a variety of patterns. One realizes that the pattern that one lives in is the product of the society in which one is born. When one understands this as a fact of life, then one is not proud of one's likes and dislikes. They are there. When one sees that, one does not try to impose one's reactions upon others. That is how freedom comes about.

Unless one understands the content of one's whole being there cannot be freedom from what is. Freedom is not a speculative game of imagining something which is not. It is rather comprehension of what is. Attention is a very explosive force. Understanding is a very explosive force. If you look at the anger, the envy, the jealousy, and how it distorts and twists your life. They will stop bothering you.

The content of the subconscious is not the bondage. The bondage is being victimized by that. An attentive person, an alert person, does not allow the subconscious to victimize him.

One more point and I will conclude this talk. As you walk in the garden, you walk in the woods, why not walk in the realm of your unconscious and subconscious? If you see a tree growing crooked, you do not say: 'oh, this tree must be uprooted'. The crooked branches add to the beauty of the tree, of the woods, as the straight ones do. Some branches grow like this and others grow down to the earth or straight upwards. In the same way you will find the beauty and the ugliness, the jealousy and the envy, everything inside you. But once it is exposed, you know what is there and you will not be taken unaware by anything inside your unconscious. You are alert and you are ahead of them. Any time anything from the unconscious wants to come to the surface, you are ahead of it. And so the response that springs out of you or which flows out of you is born of the totality of your being, it is not conditioned. That is freedom!

If one has taken the journey this far, one will see very easily that a religious enquiry cannot be done through the mind. Not your mind or my mind, but the human mind as a part of the total organism. It cannot enquire what God or truth is. God, or truth, or beauty, cannot be known by the mind. It cannot be experienced by the mind. It is beyond the senses. It is beyond the mind.

Then all this craze for acquiring and experiencing truth, and God, will spontaneously cease to be. We are trying to capture God through mind; man has tried this for centuries and God or truth defies all such silly efforts of man. So if we see that truth cannot be experienced by mind then what happens? Then the mental activity comes to an end as far as the religious enquiry is concerned. If we know that it cannot be experienced by mind, the mind becomes quiet. Movement of mind comes to an end with this understanding. Spontaneous cessation of mental activity opens the doors to silence - which is total energy, which is intelligence.

One feels afraid to allow the mind to be quiet. That is the trouble with us. If mind becomes quiet, what will happen to us? One feels that mental activity is the only action man is

capable of. And I say that mind is capable of reaction and not action. Therefore real human life begins with the cessation of mental activity.

It will be an insult to the people if I try to give out ideas or some theories or concepts. I am trying to share the facts of life with you. I may be wrong in my comprehension, but that is how I see life. God or truth, which is the unspeakable, the immeasurable, cannot be experienced by the mind. It is vitally necessary that this petty, little, shallow mind is completely silent in order for the immeasurable to come to life within us.

Discussions

Questioner:
Madam, I would like to ask you something about anger. Anger is the one subject that you discussed that impressed me the most.

Vimala:
I took it as an example sir.

Questioner:
What would you say might be one's reaction in order to fend off the coming on of anger. What does one do? What kind of awareness would you say one develops? How can you help someone to avoid angry emotions?

Vimala:
Sir, why should we avoid anger? Avoiding anger would be trying to control the subconscious. Man has tried to control, regulate and direct the subconscious and he cannot do it! If he suppresses or tries to control at one point, it pops up at another point. So avoidance is not the way. I do not think

the momentum of the subconscious can ever be avoided. It cannot be destroyed. These two things seem to me very clear.

Questioner:
What I meant was: how do we deal with anger?

Vimala:
How do I deal with anger? The specific feeling has been called anger in human language, so I also use the term and call it anger. We do not know really what anger is. It comes up. It increases the heat in my body and the heat and the blood rush to my head. I affects the optical nerves. It inhibits the auditory nerves. It shakes my balance - even physical balance. My body starts trembling. If I am learning, if I am trying to educate myself, I will see what anger is doing to me. I will see that anger has affected me in so many ways, I cannot breathe properly. If I am taking food in the moment of anger, I cannot digest properly. You know, digestive systems of short-tempered people are mostly upset. Anger upsets sanity, if I may use the term. A person under the impact of anger is really temporarily insane; it is a temporary neurosis if the word insanity is too strong.

Let the anger take you to the root, the mischiefmaker, the creator of illusions - this ego - and then you will see that every relationship based on the ego is the soil of innumerable sorrows and miseries. We go to the root and find out if we are capable of having any relationship based on love at all. You see, that takes us to the realm of humility. One becomes humble without cultivating humility. Humility is the perfume of understanding truth. You are transformed from a vain and proud person, which is immaturity, into humility. Then humility deals with anger. You and I do not have to deal with it any more.

Sixth talk, 12.10.68,

Last week when we were together in this place, we went into the nature of fundamental challenges with which humanity is faced. If I remember right, I said that the problem is threefold: the whole of humanity seems to have become a victim of chronic anxiety. The second aspect of the challenge is the feeling of loneliness which permeates the life of human beings in all countries. The third aspect of the challenge is a blind revolt against rationalism. There is a tendency to escape into a non-rational dimension of consciousness and behaviour. We went into the roots of this threefold malady. By the end of the talk we had arrived at the point that, as long as time is considered as a reality, one cannot be free of the bondage of mind.

If we look at our lives as we are living them, not at the theories and ideas, concepts and notions written down in theology and philosophy books, we will discover without much difficulty that all our actions are born of time. They are born of memory. Therefore they are not actions but only reactions. Unless one understands the nature of mental action, unless one understands the frontiers of our consciousness, it is not possible to transcend the frontiers or to go beyond the bondage, the bondage being the content of our consciousness, the stuff out of which the consciousness is made. The content of the mind becomes its own bondage. The content of knowledge and experience constitutes the frontiers within which we get bound and stuck.

So let us first go into the nature of mental action which is

not action but only reaction. The mind reacts to the impressions received by the sense-organs. You cannot prevent the sense-organs from receiving impressions. The ear is bound to hear the noise or the sound. The noise becomes sound by selection, by your choice. But the ear is bound to hear the sound vibrations. The eyes are bound to perceive the vibrations of light. The skin is bound to receive the sensation of hot and cold, soft and hard, and so on. You cannot prevent it.

The moment of being aware of those sensations gets converted into the moment of mentally reacting to them. Either we react emotionally or we react intellectually.

There is a very subtle distinction between perceiving and comprehending the sensations received by the brain and reacting to them. There is a very fine and subtle line between these two.

These patterns of emotional and intellectual reactions have been fed into the brain-cells through untold centuries by all of us together. It has been a collective human activity through educational institutions, literature, cultural activities, social, economic and political set-ups and so on. So the patterns that we have of emotionally reacting or intellectually reacting to the objective facts does not belong to us. The way of manifesting them may differ. The ways of expressing may differ, according to the temperamental idiosyncrasies, biological idiosyncrasies, the climate, the social conditions and so on. But it is a self-evident fact, that we are not the creators of thought.

This is a very simple fact of life, hardly appreciated by us. We do not bother to probe within and find out how we live. We are under an illusion that we are living. We may not be living as living involves movement which is action and we may be merely reacting passively according to the conditionings fed into us. This is a very important fact to be appreciated.

This is the content of bondage from which one has to set oneself free. Unless you understand the nature of bondage, freedom can never be arrived at. Arriving at freedom is not

an independent or isolated activity. Freedom is the perfume of understanding the nature of bondage. It results when we are in contact with the facts. I am using the terms tentatively. One hesitates to use these words. But one has to use words. Fact is neither objective nor subjective. Fact is the 'isness' of existence which is non-objective and non-subjective. When we are not in contact through the sense-organs with the external things, we are in contact with our knowledge and experience, with our memory, with our past. So either the mind is turned outward and is related to things external through the sense-organs, or the mind is related to the past - to the known. I may be in touch with either my personal memory, personal knowledge and experience consciously acquired in this life or I may be busy with the memory and experience of my family community, or with the knowledge and experience of the whole of humanity.

We react to what we read and acquire. That reaction is called thinking or feeling which is again a reaction and not an action. Any manner of mental action is no action at all. It is only reaction. Reaction is not a movement. It is like a swing oscillating between a limited space which creates an illusion of movement. This becomes possible because we have identified ourselves with the mind and the brain. We feel so proud of our acquisition of knowledge and experience. A kind of inner psychological home is created, a psychological structure with all the defence mechanism attached to it, the self as the centre of knowledge and experience. He is the owner of that psychological structure. He sits there, proud of his acquisition and takes a vantage point to look upon the world from that vantage point. One lives in this cage of knowledge and experience; you may decorate the cage in very many ways. The decoration may be artistic. It may be sensitively done. It may have its own beauty. And yet it is decoration of a prison-house created by the ego. The self by itself does not exist. It is the solidification of all knowledge and experience.

What we call life is just a repetitive mechanistic action and

there are various patterns of these reactions. Our battle concerns the superiority or inferiority of these patterns, whether in the name of religion or in the name of political ideology. I was wondering if true religion can be ever arrived at as long as we are worshipping the mind and the ego.

When the psychological structure is constructed, the self, the ego, uses the myth of time. Time is a result of the relationship between the movement of the earth and the sun. We have to arrange collective relationships. For the convenience of collective relationships we have created the unit of time as a moment, a minute, an hour, a day consisting of twenty-four hours, the week, the month and the year. These are all social conveniences. The days and the weeks do not have any reality. We have divided time, as we divide the consciousness into conscious, subconscious and the unconscious.

There is one indivisible whole - the human consciousness - but for understanding we divide it and analyse it. There are no watertight compartments in the consciousness, which is one organic whole.

If this myth of time is used only as a social convenience and is not converted into psychological time as a dimension of life, there will not be much mischief. But we do not stop here.

If you do not like the word 'myth' of time let us say symbol; these units - the hour, the day, the week, the month, the year, are symbols as are words; we have created words as symbols for interpersonal communication. Words are not the things that they denote. The things are absolutely different, independently existing by themselves. And when we want to indicate the things, we use the words as symbols. Words are no more than gestures to indicate something which is unspeakable.

In the same way psychological time is a creation of the human mind out of the raw material of chronological time which, again, is only relatively true and not an absolute truth. We are living by days consisting of twenty-four hours. What about those astronauts who are now in the orbit. If

they go round the whole globe say twenty-four times in twenty-four hours, have they lived twenty four days or only one day? How do we count it? What is their life? How will you count the life of those astronauts when they come back to the earth?

Mind uses the myth of time to construct the defence mechanism which is a psychological structure. When the mind is faced with a challenge and is lazy, sluggish and finds it strenuous to comprehend the challenge in its totality, it reacts passively, half-heartedly to one part of the challenge and leaves the other part of the challenge, to be responded to the next day.

Tomorrows and yesterdays are but the romantic creation of the human mind. There are no 'tomorrows' and no 'yesterdays'. There is only the 'present' which is the living eternity. Every moment is nothing but an unit of condensed eternity.

So, through the inadequate response of the mind to the challenge, problems are constructed and 'tomorrows' and 'yesterdays' are also constructed. We talk about problems but problems are not facts of life. A challenge is a fact of life. Problem is again a myth. Challenge gets converted into a problem when the mind does not face it totally and adequately. Every segment of challenge turned over to the subconscious gets converted into a problem.

There are no problems, there are only challenges. Somebody dies in the family and I am faced with the challenge of understanding death. I am face to face. But in the dead person I see my own image. I feel frightened that I, also, will die some day; I do not want to face the fact today. So I turn to some theories about death and about life after death, and try to console myself. Every consolation takes away the edge and sharpness from the reason. Consolations and justifications take away the sharpness, sensitivity, of the brain. Cerebral activity gets dull. The mind becomes dull. The total cessation of all activity is a very unpleasant truth for me so I say no, no, death is just an illusion. There is some soul which does not die after death.

I am angry. If I am a sensitive, alert person I can see all the ugliness that anger creates in me, biologically and psychologically; how the heat is generated; how it is rushing up to my head; how the bloodcirculation is getting faster, the breathing is getting jumpy, shaky, jurky; how the whole nervous system is becoming tense. I do not want to face the fact of anger and go to the root of it. It is very unpleasant, so I go only to the immediate cause and say that the other person who is silly and stupid, has caused the anger. Or I may go to a distant cause and say my father or mother were of this temperament; I have inherited the tendency. This is just another excuse. The analysis consoles me or justifies my getting angry.

I do not see the fact that anger is a movement of the ego which expects the whole world to behave according to his idiosyncrasies. The ego wants to cut all individuals to the size, shape, the colour and shade of its liking. When its expectations are thwarted, the ego puts out its fangs like a serpent. This is a simple fact. Anger is a thwarted ego trying to bite into the situations.

If we go to the root of anger we have already gone to the root of jealousy, envy and violence and what not. But we do not want to go to the whole of it so we find out the immediate and the direct cause; the indirect and the distant, the biological inheritance and so on. The consciousness is cluttered with these excuses and justifications. As long as one is functioning through the ego, that sits in the self-created cage and uses the myth of psychological time, we will never know what freedom is. We will never know what love is.

We will never know what religion is. Religion is living in humility. Humility is the perfume of love. Love is the movement of understanding of life as it moves.

So it is vitally necessary to see that functioning through the psychological structure, which is a defence mechanism of the ego, you can never become a religious person. You may go to the church, to the temple, to the mosque, repeat certain words and prayers, go to certain rituals - physical or psy-

chological - everything that you do strengthens the ego. It will create new frontiers for the mind or the consciousness.

Freedom, liberation, nirvana, satori, meditation, any name that you like - is not through the mind. You cannot attain freedom by act of will or by any mental action. It is very important to see this fact. Generally we think that by sense we will transcend mind by creating more sensitivity, refining it and by increasing the powers of the mind. Concentration is an art of developing mental powers, manifested and hidden in all the layers of consciousness. It is an activity of the mind all the same. The exclusive activity of focusing the mind has created its own jargon. They call it 'distraction' and 'disturbance'. This is a very pet terminology of many so-called religious persons.

What is a distraction? Is there anything like a distraction or a disturbance? Disturbances and distractions come into existence when I am indulging in an exclusive activity. If I am not focusing the attention on one point to the exclusion of the rest. If I have an all inclusive attention, will there be any thing like a distraction? Concentration which is an exclusive activity of the mind, strengthens the ego. It may open up new avenues for developing the mental and the occult powers like clairvoyance and clairaudience.

These powers have nothing to do with religion and spirituality. A person practising Hatha Yoga or an athlete who goes to the gymnasium every day, may develop certain powers which you and I may not have. In the same way, practising concentration may develop many hidden powers of the mind. But still, the ego that takes the experience of those powers is there. The ego as the experiencer is there. The whole triangle of the experiencer, experiencing and the experiences is there. So you go on adding to the content of the bondage. You enrich the content of the bondage by indulging in extra-sensory and transcendental experiences, which are again bound by time.

Coming from the East one has seen many things about these transcendental experiences and the indulging in the

occult world. It is a mental activity whether we like it or not. As long as there is the possibility of experiencing something, whether you experience a sensual pleasure, a sexual pleasure or you turn to the transcendental experience, the quality of the ego indulging in experiencing, acquiring and owning experiences is just the same thing. It is only the object of experience which changes.

Religion is a merciless and ruthless enquiry of what is. One has to go into all these unpleasant truths hesitatingly. One has to discover for oneself how development of occult powers is not religion. In the realm of reality there is no one to take any experience and there is nothing to have experience of. There is only the naked purity of existence. There is the purity of is-ness. Energy moves in its totality without a motive or a direction. We will come to that later on. Let it be very clear that every activity which involves an ego-centred movement will not take us towards freedom. It will not take us towards peace, love or compassion.

As far as the discovery of truth is concerned one does not provoke the mind to function. One does not induce the mind to function. One allows it to be in abeyance. We do not fight against the mind. We do not try to suppress its activity. You know when you understand a truth you do not have to suppress anything.

I see a beautiful bottle in a shop and there is a liquid of a very attractive colour in it. I am attracted. I walk towards it with the intention of taking the bottle from the shelf and drinking the liquid. I read the label, 'poison'. I do not have to make any independent effort to withdraw my intention or to suppress it. The very understanding operates upon my total being. The intention and the desire to acquire it ceases to be. I do not have to drop it.

In religion there is nothing to give up. There is nothing to acquire. One has to understand the truth as it is and the falsehood as it is. We do not induce the mind to experience the state of silence. Silence is not an experience of the mind. It is not a state of mind. It is a dimension of the total being.

It is a growth into which the person totally grows and there is no returning from it. There is no going into and coming out of it. There is no stimulating and subsiding of it. It is there. So one does not try to induce states of silence and try to acquire the experience of silence. The craze for experiencing, is a mental activity and that craze comes to an end. It comes to an end as a result of understanding the nature of mental activity. So one allows the mind to be silent.

For persons living in the industrial civilization, it is difficult even to relax physically. One has not been educated in the way to relax physically, to breathe in a relaxed way. So even physical relaxation becomes a mental action, an act of the will. Relaxation which should be a natural state of our being has become so very complicated. The simplicity and the beauty of relaxation is converted into such an ugly complexity.

The whole of America and Europe cannot turn to the caves in the Himalayas or Greece. It will be escaping and not facing the problem. We have to face the problem. Out of the complexity, we have to grow into maturity. This is the context in which we have to learn how to relax physically first. We will have to have self-education. We will have to educate ourselves. We might have to educate ourselves how to sit, how to breathe, how to eat, how to stand up and how to walk.

People think that spirituality, liberation, is somewhere far away from the main stream of life; it has nothing to do with how I walk and talk. But as we said in the very beginning, life is one indivisible whole. You cannot create watertight compartments in it. You cannot divide it into mundane and spiritual, secular and religious. It is one whole. Religious act is an act done in total awareness, not passively, not mechanically, but with full awareness. Then there is a rhythm in the physical movement. When you move rhythmically, when you breathe in a rhythm, you will see that already the nervous tension has become less. You cannot learn relaxation if you are tense for twenty-three hours and

spend one hour learning relaxation. We cannot divide life like that.

Meditation or liberation which is a total way of life, has to revolutionize everything that we do. One learns to use the mind properly when one has to use the mind, one does not misuse it, does not use it impulsively or irrationally.

The mind has tremendously more speed than all your cars, ships and jets, all that you have created. Today the distance between India and America is shrinking because of your jets. By ship you could do that distance in twenty days. Now you do it in twenty hours. The space and the distance are shrinking. If you have more speed, then instead of twenty hours you might do it in twenty minutes. Mind has got infinite speed to travel from place to place. You will see that the infinity of motion and eternity are the same. These are not concepts. Let not the mind try to reduce even this fact to a theory or concept. The mind has to be used for mechanical action scientifically, sanely and in a healthly way.

For example: I should speak when verbal communication is necessary and not for gossiping. If I gossip, I misuse the capacity of speech as well as the intellect and the mind. If I am brooding unnecessarily over the past experiences, pleasant and painful, I am misusing the mind, I am violating the sanctity of memory which is a very sacred capacity. Every movement of the mind should be made when it is warranted. When the mind is used only when it is inevitable to use it and when the mode of operation is also scientific, sane and healthy, much of the tension is reduced and your mental movement becomes a relaxed movement. When you talk you do not talk out of disturbance, out of temper or envy, jealousy or agony but you speak and act out of a comprehension of the subjective and the objective both.

We began this evening by saying that as long as the myth of time is not exploded and the time-bound action of the mind is not transcended, freedom cannot be. We went into exploring how every mental action is only a reaction. Patterns of reaction are called culture. Then there is a compari-

son, evaluation, selection and so we go on. It is time-bound action.

Then we went into the relative reality of chronological time and the myth of psychological time invented by the mind. We found out how the ego takes the help of the myth of psychological time to create its defence mechanism and how it creates the whole structure, sits at the center and controls every movement. We found out that every action of the mind strengthens the ego. So discovery of truth cannot be a mental action. It cannot be an ego-centered act.

We went still further and said that concentration is an exclusive activity which removes you from the main current and stream of life. So we have to allow all mental activity to come to an end. In the cessation of mental activity, silence as a dimension of life becomes alive.

Discussions

Questioner:
As the ego is all pervasive and powerful, will not the intention to meditate be overpowered by ego?

Vimala:
Will not meditation become a function of the ego?
Look Sir, how can the ego function when there is nothing to acquire, to obtain? The ego moves when there are two things; one: some motivating force, and another: the direction in which the ego can move. Without a direction the ego cannot move.

The ego can function when we concentrate. It is a mental action. In meditation, in the realm of mindless-ness, the ego cannot function. That is the beauty of meditation. There is nothing that the ego can do.

No ego-centred action is possible because it is not a mental

action; I do not have to meditate. Meditation is a state of awareness into which mind or the ego has no scope to function. How can it be overpowered by the ego? You see the beauty of it? It is the cessation of total mental activity.

Questioner:
I was wondering if Yoga could be used to acquire Truth?

Vimala:
The questioner says I wonder if Yoga could be helpful in . . .

Questioner:
. . . acquiring . . .

Vimala:
In arriving at. Not acquiring. It is nothing to be acquired. That is the beauty of truth. Man has tried to acquire it. But God, the truth or the reality has defied all human efforts to catch it. Are you asking, sir, whether Yoga can be helpful in arriving at that state of freedom? Yes?

What do we mean by Yoga? Yoga is a very wide and comprehensive term. Firstly it is a Sanscrit word, the root of the word means to unite. Any system which can help a person to get united to the roots of his existence is called Yoga.

If you do it through devotion call it Bhakti Yoga. If you try to do it through knowledge they call it Jnana Yoga. If you try to do it through concentration and meditation they call it Dhyana Yoga. If you try to do it through action or karma they call it Karma Yoga. If you try to do it by purification of the whole biological and psychological system, it is called Hatha Yoga.

So, you know there are so many systems. What do we exactly imply when we use the term Yoga? In the West somehow the word Yoga has been limited to Hatha Yoga - purification of the biological system and developing certain occult powers to have transcendental experiences.

Questioner:
What is the physical use of Yoga today? As a physical exercise for relaxing and purifying oneself?

Vimala:
It might purify and beautify the biological system.
It can help one to learn the scientific rhythm of breathing. You know breath is the most purifying force? If one learns Pranayama - there are twelve ways of Pranayama: - inhaling, exhaling and retaining the mathematical proportion between these three - one can purify the whole physical structure. It can give you longevity of life, it can beautify the biological system. It can help in soothing the nervous system, which is misunderstood for peace of mind.
Yes, but who is going to change the society? How do societies get changed? Social relationships which are extensions of our individual ambitions and passions and drives; after all, when such individual sentiments, feelings, ambitions, passions are woven into a texture and get organized - you get what is called society.
And man through a wrong way of living, through a fragmentary way of living, has created the present texture of relationship. If you try to change it through law, through the bullet, or through the ballot-box; entirely depending upon the bullet or the legislation does not take you very far. You have seen, in both the communist and the non-communist countries, that legislation and changing the social and economic context, the political set-up, does not change the quality of human consciousness. They do not change the relationship of the human mind with money, with property, with ownership, the will to dominate, the will to acquire and possess. All this does not get changed by that. That way man has tried, running away, getting divorced from society, going to some monastery, creating temples, ashrams, that way also man has tried in the East and in the West. That does not solve the problem. Running away from life does not solve the problem, running away from society does not

solve the problem, nor does imposing a pattern on the authority of the state solve it.

What is left is you and I as individuals going through a total revolution by ourselves, on ourselves and becoming living cells of that dynamic revolutionary process. So while I am working as a typist, as a secretary, as a cashier in an office, while I am married, running a family, bringing up children; I have to see if I can go through this psychological revolution, if I can step out of the whole psyche that has been created up till now. That is what I am saying. These two alternatives are ruled out completely by history. Do not you think so?

Questioner:
How are you to do this when sitting answering telephones or typewriting? This is very boring. How are you to do this?

Vimala:
Either I see it as an inevitable part of the game: Supposing I want to live in the country I am born and brought up in. Now I have the skill of typing or I am working with the telephone, receiving the calls and jotting them down. I have accepted it as the minimum kind of contact with the society as I want to earn a decent livelihood and do not want to depend upon others and become a parasite. So I have accepted. I know that this is a repetitive job - just receiving the phone calls and noting them down, perceiving it is going to be a repetitive work - there will be no release for my creative energy and doing it six hours a day or eight hours a day is going to be the price that I pay for providing the needs of my body; this must be clearly understood. So I am going into it voluntarily as the minimum point of contact with the society and I do it. Then there is no tension in doing it. There will be a nervous exhaustion, mind you, there will be. So that one equipts in the morning, one goes through certain exercises, keeps the muscular and the nervous system intact - supple, sharp, sensitive - one does all that. But those seven

or eight hours, either I pay the price of earning a livelihood this way because I cannot escape from the country in which I have been born, so I do it. Or I try to find out an other avenue of earning a livelihood in which there will be some release to the creative energy. It may give me less salary and less comfort but then I will say 'never mind I will go for a poorer life but I have my freedom!' So, one might find it out that way too.

But what I am trying to say is in your industrialized civilization it seems well nigh impossible to escape a minimum of nervous tension and strain - the stresses and the strains of industrial civilization are bound to be there. But I need not become a victim of the science of advertisement which is flourishing in these countries. We go on advertising the new fads - the new modes of clothes, newfashions of shoes and new diets and what not. And every month and every season, perhaps every week the rich people in this country, are watching the advertisements.

And those commercially minded people employ psychologists to find out the weak points in the subconscious of human beings, how to tempt them, how to get their attention and the employed psychologists are very heavily payed by businessmen and industrialists. So they try to victimize you and catch your subconscious passions and exploit them.

So one will see through the whole game and will not be victimized by that. One will not be running away ceaselessly for spending a vacation of seven days, travel three thousand miles, exhaust yourself completely and have such a heavy programme hour to hour and minute to minute. By the time you come back to your work you are completely shattered though you had your vacation. Those who are organizing the leisure of the ordinary persons like you and me, they will also employ psychologists very shortly; they are going to do it. I have seen it in the West European countries in beautiful advertisements - you do not have to worry where to pitch the tent, you have such a locality and the market will be at a short distance and you will have these entertainments and

there will be such concerts - they give you the whole schedule. You go to a tourist agency and they have organized your leisure: you do not have to find out anything at all. So from one passive and repetitive action in the name of vacation, you plunge into another passivity and follow some schedules there. You will not be victimized by all this, you see? Accept the minimum that is necessary, you will be on your guard and will not allow anyone to exploit your life, sitting passively for the television for hours together, passively watching. I have nothing to say against television or science and technology. I love it. But we do not know how to use them. So hours together sitting, vicariously living; either on those films in which they show suspense and something to stimulate the sexual urge. And that is how the cult of sex is coming up in the industrialized civilization, getting out of proportion to the total life. Everything becoming sexy. You cannot read any advertisement which will not be stimulating that feeling. So what are we doing with the whole young generation, what are we doing with our own children? Something that melts my heart in my mouth.

But a person like you or me who is alert will not be victimized by all this. What I mean by freedom is: if my country asks me to go to war, calling it a just war, I will refuse to do it. If I am convinced and if I see the futility of killing someone, I will not go into it. Not identifying oneself with all that mind has created up till now. It is an adventure. Such revolutionary individuals may loose everything on earth but at least they will live and die in freedom which is something much more precious than all the wealth of the world. Was my reply relevant?

Questioner:

I cannot understand your philosophy or whatever it is. It seems like a cowardly way out of life, and it seems like a contradiction. Because firstly you say that one should learn to observe - in other words to look at something without having any feeling for it at all. That is what I understand

that you said. You said that you should not look at it and say that it is beautiful, and you should not look at it and say that it is terrible - just look at it for one second, feel nothing. If I cannot look at anything without acknowledging something, you know, as being beautiful, or ugly, or even existing - well then there is no point in life, there is no point for this existence in the whole world. And you say 'I do not want you to strive for nothing, even though they are existing.' Well, that is a contradiction. You say that you should exist in nothingness. And here you are, caring about, or you must care, otherwise you would not come here and try to convince all these people, or whatever the reason is that all these people come to listen to you. You are contradicting yourself, because you are showing feeling and you are not supposed to. It is supposed to be nothingness. Why not just be dead?

Vimala:
Have you attended the last talk?

Questioner:
No I did not.

Vimala:
This is the second part of what we had begun last time. I did not say that you should not enjoy the beauty. But when you react emotionally, there is a very subtle distinction.

When I see the beauty of a thing, my mind comes up and says 'oh I would like to have it, I would like to see it again, I have not seen anything as beautiful as this before.' It starts comparing, or it would like to own that experience and continue that experience. This activity of the mind spoils the totality of relationship between that what you are seeing and yourself.

Questioner:
So I just can look at it and say 'it is beautiful'. I cannot expect anything more from it, or want anything more from it, or

have any desire other than seeing it right that second?

Vimala:
No I am not saying 'you should have, or you should not have'. I am trying to explain this reaction in relationship to the ego. You see all our actions and all our relationships are based on ego. So the moment you see something - even before you have seen it completely - the ego comes up and says 'I like this or I do not like, I want it, and I do not want it'. This relationship of acquiring it and owning it comes up, liking or disliking comes up, and that is a partial or fragmentary action. That is what we were saying that it does not allow the totality to be in communion with the other thing but brings up a partial response of the ego. Does this make any sense?

Questioner:
I understand what you are saying.

Questioner:
In observing your breathing, this is another form of meditation I think. You observe your thoughts but do not get involved in them. Is this correct? And in this you observe your breathing and you do not get involved in your thoughts. Is your breathing just an aid? So that you will not be caught up in your thoughts?

Vimala:
What is the question? You are suggesting there is a way of observing the breathing and then not gettting involved in the thought.

Questioner:
And listen to say that . . . oh, I think I understand it.

Seventh talk, 13.10.68, Palo Alto-California

There cannot be peace and happiness in the world as long as man is getting related to the objective world through his mind.

How does one transcend the frontiers of human consciousness and arrive at living silence or peace?

This challenge of psychological revolution is the basic challenge from which none of us can escape. The beauty of psychological mutation is, one cannot form any idea about its consequences. It cannot be planned and systematically worked out by the brain. The results or the consequences cannot be worked out by the mind beforehand. I would like to emphasize this aspect of the revolution.

The word revolution is not used in the current sense. The word 'revolution' today, is related first to an ideology, second to some method or technique for bringing about a change according to these. We are not using the word 'psychological revolution' in this sense. For us it is total transformation of the psyche.

Now we cannot form any idea of what happens when the total transformation takes place, or of what should happen. Up till now man has been a victim of the trap of ideation. His mind is busy ideating, forming ideas. From his experience of concrete everyday events and situations, he deduces certain conclusions. That is how the mind works. And he organizes ideas. They are converted into thought. He puts these thoughts according to his order of priority into certain order. They become a theory or an ideology. Thus the mind is

busy with ideation. As soon as you talk about God or religion the mind wants to form an idea about God, truth or the reality. It wants an idea of what happens beyond the mind. It is a very beautiful but subtle thing to note that the mind is busy ideating about everything. Without ideas the mind cannot exist.

We form concepts, notions and theories of God. It is the vanity of man which makes him presumptuous enough to say that God is this and God is not that. We reduce God to our stature. We try to impose or project the deductions of our everyday experience upon the god whom we call Almighty. Therefore you find a variety of man-made gods.

In the realm of mind everything will be conceptualized. Everything will be ideated. One has to be intensely aware of this evil habit of the mind. The foundation of religion cannot be laid in the mechanism of mind because mind is busy projecting concepts, notions and ideas. The realm of reality defies conceptualization and ideation.

We have to be very cautious, when we talk of meditation. As long as you can experience something it is very clear that it is in the periphery of the ego. The ego is there to take experience of something. It is a play of the mind on a very subtle level. When the conscious mind has been pacified the subconscious with all its experiences becomes active and one starts experiencing. These experiences have nothing to do with meditation. In the state of meditation, the experiencer himself ceases to be. There is no possibility of experiencing anything.

Meditation has been confounded with opening up of the subconscious. Meditation has been confounded with the capacity to experience visions. I would like to emphasize that meditation is a state of being, a state of awareness, in which the experiencer, the ego, ceases to be. It cannot be an activity of the mind. And if I am tempted by the achievements of the brain and the mind and I want to identify myself with the achievements of the mind and the brain, please be sure that we are far away from the way of meditation.

Meditation is a total way of life. Meditation is exposing oneself to the unknown. Having seen the limitations of the known, one stands exposed to the unknown. In the realm of the unknown all the concepts of all the races and communities and religions have no relevance whatsoever. In the realm of meditation, nothing which is borrowed from others is of any relevance.

Are we willing to expose ourselves to the unknown? That is the basic question. Nobody wants to expose himself to the unknown. One wants to hold, cling to the known. One wants to cling not only to the concept of Hinduism or Christianity, of being an American or an Indian, but one wants also to cling to one's preferences, judgements and evaluations. One has to become lighter and lighter, throw away the unwarranted weight if one wants to climb the mountain top. In the same way, the acquisitions of the ego must be left behind. All relationships which are created by society for the convenience of collective life, are not the reality. Is one willing to stand in the nudity exposed to the unknown and to say that one is nothing?

In the austerity of that nudity, which is innocence, which is humility, the journey to the beyond begins. I may do all the Yoga exercises, and I may indulge in many transcendental experiences, but that has nothing to do with religion. And it is far, far away from what we call meditation. So is one willing to expose oneself to the unknown? You will say 'if I do not belong to my family, if I do not belong to my nation, my race, my religion, where do I belong to?' Perhaps in the state of meditation you will find that you as an entity, isolated from the universal life, do not exist at all. This concept of 'me', the concept of the ego as an individual entity, independent of, isolated from the universal life may be a myth, we do not know.

It is playing with fire. It is being completely free. And who wants freedom in this world? Everybody feels safe in the defense mechanism created by the ego. One wants to be secure in that prison-house, and sometimes open a window

to find out how the other prison-houses are. Freedom is a very dangerous thing. You are vulnerable to life.

But we have created so many safeguards around us, we are afraid to live.

Meditation is living exposed to every movement of life without any defense mechanism at all. I wonder if you have noticed how, every person is busy from morning till night, brick by brick, constructing the defense mechanism for himself. That is what our life is and we feel very safe. I must know how to behave when I get angry, so I try to read books on ethics and religion, one is afraid of life and so one tries to calculate how to act in the eventuality of anger. If I am upset by sexual urge what do I do, how do I fight the obsession with sex? So they read about celibacy. They talk about continence. Every safeguard that you construct in the name of ethics, morality, religion or culture, is really restricting your freedom. One is afraid to live and therefore one wants safeguards against life. Surely such a person cannot be in the state of meditation, which is a state of total freedom.

All that the mind has created will have to be put aside. There is no one to take experience of. There are no norms and values to judge. There is no ego to compare, to recognize experiences. When I realize the fact that I really do not belong to all these external shells created by society around me, the whole realm of the known is pushed aside, as they are all myths.

Sitting down to observe in this way, you will discover that we do not know the art of observation. We do not know how to look in a simple way. Even before the retina has received the impressions of anything, the mind starts working, giving it a name, evaluating it, comparing it, and forming an opinion about it. This whole complex process gets mixed up with the simple act of observation.

If we look at the movement within, the moment of looking at movement within ourselves, becomes the moment of introspection and anlysis. Either we condemn what is happening or praise what is happening within us. Both ways the

mind is busy. We do not know how to look simply. If we are near the ocean standing on the beach and if we are not consumed by the ego and the desires of the ego, the immensity of the ocean may have a staggering effect upon us. For a fraction of a second the mind ceases to function. But after a fraction of a second, the mind starts functioning again. The mind is busy with its previous experience comparing it with the present experience. The mind is busy with the experiences and the beach has disappeared.

We have lost the capacity to look simply; to look with a glance of innocence at anything at all. We cannot look at anything without either liking it or disliking it. I am not saying that one should get dazed and look stupidly at the things by which one is surrounded, or at the world within oneself. We will have to de-hypnotize the consciousness and learn the art of simple observation.

Then while you are looking at the tree you will be looking at the roots which are under the ground. You will be looking at the trunk, the beauty of the lines on the trunk, the branches and the various romantic, poetic designs created by the various curves of the branches, the freshness of the leaves and the tenderness of the buds and flowers - everything in one glance. How the trees take energy from the sunshine, the rays of the sun, from the water, the sky and from the various juices from the earth. One will not only look at the flowers and the leaves and the trunk and the roots, but the relation of the roots to the totality of the universe in one glance. One will see, if one really so looks that the same energy flows through this human body as it flows through the trees, through the waters and shines through the rays of the sun and blows through the breeze. It is the play of the same energy.

But we have no time even to feel that oneness or unity. We are so busy analyzing, liking, disliking and judging.

I was wondering if one could begin to learn the art of simple observation. People who sit in silence do not observe what is coming up in their minds. They judge what is happening.

When you start judging, the ego starts functioning. The mind will capture your attention and entangle you again in the network of many escapes.

So one has to learn the art of simple observation, looking at a thing not to derive pleasure or pain from it, not to acquire it or own it, not to disown it, but just the joy of being in communion with life around and life within. If you do so some time, you will find how the observer and the observed merge into the process of observing. There is not the duality of the observer and the observed left, but only the act of observing remains, dynamically moving. Everyone can experiment with it and everyone can arrive at that beautiful state of silence, peace and complete freedom.

Now what does one do in relationships? Firstly one sees in the very beginning, that all what I call my own - my family, my house, my friends - is based on the ego. I have no relationship with anything in the world except through the ego. One has to realize this fact first. It will take away much of suffering and the tendency of developing a martyr complex. I earn money. It is a necessity to have a livelihood. I need a house. I need clothes. How many of us earn only for providing the needs of the body? Decent and scientific provision for the elementary needs of body is one thing; and earning money for gaining more and more social respectability and entering a competitive race for respectability, fame, prestige and comfort is another. We do many things to gratify the ego. One has to find out how one lives. Then you will find that much of the lust and ambition for earning more and more and more and more will drop away. They will not have any importance then. One has a scientific relationship with things. Earning the livelihood will be related to the provision of needs and not to the gratification of the ego.

Meditation is relaxation in action every moment. It is a relaxation in movement, otherwise it has no value. It is not a state of mind to be stimulated in isolation. If someone tries to insult me does it stimulate any traditional reaction in me? Of course it does. Getting angry is a traditional reaction. As

soon as in the animal world the animal feels that its security is disturbed it just rushes and pounces upon the victim. In the same way the moment we feel that our psychological security is in danger, we immediately react. Let us find out how we are slaves of the memory; how we are slaves of our experiences. When you see the anger, the jealousy, the envy, coming up you will not try to stifle, suppress or deny it - it will be hypocrisy to do so - but you will not allow that feeling to dictate the nature of the response.

You see, freedom is nothing mysterious or mystical. Freedom is - being constantly aware of the momentum of the subconscious which determines threefourths of our actions. Being aware of the momentum of memory, the subconscious, and always being ahead of it. Observing the flowers and the trees is easy. Observing the stream of thoughts while sitting in a corner is easy. But to observe the momentum of memory while you are living and working - needs tremendous energy. It needs tremendous sensitivity and alertness to do so. When the envy or the jealousy comes up, you go to the root of it and you say yes, I am jealous of the other person because I see my own poverty; I am jealous of the other person because I am not reconciled to the fact of what I am.

After all what is jealousy? Jealousy is really not a feeling directed towards others, it is a feeling directed towards oneself. One is not reconciled to the fact of one's own existence. One wants to run away from it. So if you see a richer person than you are, then you feel jealous - not because he is rich but because you are poor. If you see a more handsome or more beautiful person, jealousy comes up again seems to be directed towards that person. It has nothing to do with that person. The person has occasioned the stimulation of discontent with the reality of your own life. So for getting free of jealousy or envy one does not have to form a code of conduct and impose a discipline upon oneself. But if I see that jealousy or envy is the result of my dissatisfaction with myself, my unwillingness to face what I am, then the searchlight of attention will be focussed upon the

reality of my own life. That is meditation. It is an all inclusive attention which is all the time moving with the movement of life. It is getting related to the facts as they are and not wishing them away. A person who has seen how the movement of ego creates jealousy and envy, has seen all the mischief of the ego. This moment it is jealousy. Next moment it is anger; third moment discontent; fourth moment it is violence; all this implies the unwillingness of the ego to face the reality.

The enquirer of meditation, the enquirer of what freedom is, is observing. Really you cannot have the luxury of being absentminded and distracted. You have to be totally aware every moment of life, you have to watch the movement and move with life as it comes and unfolds, without getting stuck in your reactions. Freedom is to move with life without inhibitions. Nothing from the objective world prevents us but it is rather our own subjective world, our own subconscious in which we get stuck.

Psychological revolution is setting oneself free of the momentum of memory. You cannot destroy memory. You cannot wish it away. It is there. It is bound to be there. You cannot wish away the senses. They are bound to be there receiving impressions. You cannot wish away the conditioned brain cells. They are bound to react according to their conditioning. Man has been fighting against it for centuries in the name of religion and that is how conflicts and contradictions have come about. Neither the way of suppressing nor the way of fighting it, is the right way.

We began by saying that meditation is not a mental activity, so the habit of mind, the habit of ideation and conceptualization will not be of any use in meditation. Those who want the sensation of having new experiences should go the way of concentration and not the way of meditation. It is a total way of life. The craze for extrasensory and transcendental experiences is a raging storm all over the world. Everybody wants experiences. Meditation on the other hand is a way of total freedom. It is the realm of nothingness. It is

the realm of emptiness. It is not negative. It is creative. It is full of dynamism. We may talk about it next week. To play with meditation is more dangerous than playing with fire. You may be in the realm where you as an entity may not survive separate from the universal life. You as a rigid entity, the ego, the self, the me, may not be there at all. This 'you', this myth of the I-consciousness has been created and built up through centuries. It is solidified knowledge and experience. It may melt away completely. Is the urge for freedom so strong, is the flame of enquiry burning so bright that all else will be consumed in the flame?

People who want both, really get themselves into a very miserable condition. For some hours they want to be religious and for some hours they want to be the successful businessman and the most efficient administrator. They want to go by the norms and standards of the world, and they want to talk about religion and meditation and truth and what not. That creates an additional contradiction and one becomes a victim of schizophrenia. This is a dangerous game to play.

Is one willing to expose oneself to total freedom? And I say again that it is the only hope of the world. To have the courage to stand in the denudation of consciousness - that is humility.

Eighth talk, 13.10.68, San Francisco-California
At the Church of Metaphysical Design for Living

I deem it a privilege and an honour to be allowed to come here this morning and talk to you about something which is very close to my heart.

As, without sushine, life becomes dull and cold, so without love life becomes meaningless and tasteless. If we look at the history of humanity through many bygone centuries, we see that man has yet to find out for himself what love is. He has yet to make a personal discovery of that beautiful dimension of life which is love. He has yet to be rooted in love, live in love and act out of love. Man has not yet become mature. And therefore, whether in the East or in the West, man is living in misery and sorrow, going through untold sufferings and tears which are unwarranted for a humane life.

To me, love is maturity. Hate is immaturity. Love is non-violence when expressed in human relationships which is maturity. And lack of love is violence when expressed in human relationships. Individually or collectively there seems to be a storm raging over the horizons of the global human family of hate, bitterness and violence. One wonders when we are going to learn the way of love. One wonders when man is going to grow into maturity and finish this juvenile business of fighting in the name of race, religion, nation, political ideologies and economic theories.

For me life without love, life without God, has no meaning at all. All the physical comfort, material progress, economic security and political stability become decorations of a tomb.

Let us find out what we mean by love. How does one arrive

at that dimension of love where peace reigns supreme. Where mutual understanding and reverence for one another becomes the perfume of mutual relationships. Love surely is not a sentiment or a feeling. We live through the senses. We are either agreeably disposed towards certain things emotionally or we are disagreeably disposed towards some other things. That is what we call pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow. They are not facts of life. The agreeability or disagreeability of a sensation to the sense organs and agreeability or disagreeability of a sensation to the mind, is termed joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain.

Now when I am emotionally agreeably disposed towards a person I say that I love that person. I have affection for that person. And I would like to submit that it is not love. It is a feeling. It is a sentiment which results from the agreeability of a sensation. That is all. Love is not a sentiment or a feeling at all. Love is not instinct or impulse which the human beings carry in their psychology as the hangover of the animal world.

Impulses and instincts also create a kind of agreeable sensation. So impulsively you feel attracted towards a person or you feel repulsed from a person. Repulsion is the shadow of attraction. It has no independent existence of its own. Such impulsive fascination or impulsive repulsion surely is not love. That attraction lasts as far as the momentum of the impulse can carry it. When the momentum of the impulse gets exhausted, the attraction fades away.

Those who are intellectually developed, feel attracted towards other persons who have similar thought tendencies, ideas, ideologies and theories. What is an idea or an ideology? It is an organized thought, is not it? So, I feel attracted towards other persons who have the same thinking pattern, the same pattern of intellectual reactions to situations. And I call that attraction love or affection. That is not love, surely. Similarity in thinking is not the foundation of love.

Today I feel attracted and tomorrow the person changes his ideology or way of thinking. Then the comrades of

yesterday and today become the competitors and enemies of tomorrow. That is what is happening in Czechoslovakia and Russia today. So this attraction, created by the stimulation of intellect in the same direction, is not love.

Thirdly we take gratification of the ego as love or affection. I have a family, I have a husband or a wife and children. As long as the husband or the wife gratifies the ego, the will of the ego to dominate, the desire of the ego to own and possess things and individuals to control and shape the behaviour of the members of my family, I say I love them. If the husband or the wife or the children cease to gratify my ego, if they grow into independent human beings, defying all my attempts to own, possess and dominate them - then the so-called love of the husband of the wife gets converted into hatred, enmity, jealousy and envy. These are our daily experiences. So one must confess to oneself that one does not know what love is. I do not know how many of us will have the humility to say it even to ourselves that we do not know what love is. Our sentiment and feeling of love or affection which is rooted in duality, which is only a temporary psychological tendency and which has become the foundation of our life and relationships - is not love. We do not know what love is and we lack love in our lives.

Of course, one could not describe or define what God is. Therefore I hesitate to use that word. But for me love is God and God is love. And love is not different from truth. Call truth the fragrance of love or call love the perfume of truth. It is just the same. It is the same fact. The angle of looking at it may be different.

We may have huge libraries. We may have books on theology, philosophy and metaphysics. We may hear the talks of many a saint and a sage, a yogi or a monk, and yet our lives are empty. When we depart from the world, we depart empty handed, with ashes of words filled in our minds. That is the root of all misery and sorrow. If we really see this as a plain truth of life and not as an idea of a crazy person coming from the East, if we see this as a naked truth

in our daily life, then that very understanding will strip our consciousness of al the vanity and pride.

The real human civilization will not begin unless man learns the way of love. We are civilizing, we are refining and culturing the external shells. The bodies and the minds are but shells within which we dwell. But inside these shells we are barbarians. So let us have the humility to say to ourselves that we have yet to discover how to live as a human being on this earth.

One is not denying the significance of what man has achieved through science and technology, arts, sculpture and music. One does not deny the importance of sciences. But this is dealing with the world of symbols. All the languages in the world, one may become proficient in, and yet one is dealing with symbols. Words are symbols, they are not the reality. One may learn classical music of the East and the West and it may soothe the nervous system, it may pacify the surface consciousness, it may create and induce a state of silence for the mind and yet one is still in the realm of symbols. One may be an artist, a sculptor and deal with lines and shapes, light and forms and create something which is very noble. But one must realize that all those lines and figures, the forms, the shapes, are symbols.

We are using means of transport which can take us faster and faster. The whole globe is shrinking. Space and time are shrinking before the efforts of human brain. What is time? A social convenience invented by the human mind for arranging collective human relationships. Time has no reality. It is a symbol. So what man has achieved up till now is all in the realm of the symbols created by the human brain. You may create computors, transmit into them the power of memory, repetitive and reproductive actions; you may teach them how to speak, you may teach everything that you as a human being can do and yet it is in the realm of duality, in the realm of symbols.

If one wants to understand what life is, one has to transcend this mind. One has to transcend the psychological structure

created by the ego.

We are given names by our parents and society, we are Harrys and Roberts, Joans and Ruths. These are the names given to us. We are taught how to react emotionally and intellectually. We go on acquiring various patterns of thinking, feeling and reacting. They are stored in our memory. We react according to those patterns and we call them our thoughts and our feelings. There is nothing original and nothing individual on the level of the mind. Thoughts and feelings, and patterns of reacting are created by society. One may decorate them in different individuals, but the psychological structure is a creation of society. As long as one is living in the prisonhouse created by society, constructed by the ego, one will never be able to commune with life in a simple and direct way.

I feel time is ripe, for the whole of humanity to go through a total psychological revolution - a mutation in the psyche.

It is no more necessary to play about with the psyche. To give it new thoughts, ideas and new ways of reacting. Man has to find out the way of stepping out of the psyche altogether. Man has to discover a new dimension. Man is much more than his body and mind supply. So stepping out of the prison-house created by the self is the beginning of religion.

Religion is a personal discovery of the truths of life. So one has to launch upon an adventurous journey within. Journey beyond the mind is not outside of us. It is beyond within us. So it is an inward voyage, not an outward one. We cannot carry the mind with us on that voyage.

Mind is unequal to the task of discovering what is beyond symbols. Mind is incapable of finding out anything except through the means of sense organs and the storehouse of memory. Either the mind has to refer to the senses or to the memory. Mind cannot function in any other way but by these two. And these two are bound by symbols. Take away the symbol, take away words, and the mind cannot think. Can any person think without words? We cannot even speak without words. So transcending the frontiers of our psyche

cannot be an act of the mind. It cannot be an act of the will. The only thing one can do is to leave the mind with all its talents and capacities intact, in abeyance. With the cessation of mental activity, reactions come to an end and the doors open to real action. It is not easy to live in humility. Mind, the mischiefmaker and the creator of illusions, wants to peep in at every turn, distort and twist the response according to the convenience of the ego, the owner of that psychological structure. The very content of consciousness becomes the bondage. Sometimes we come to the periphery and give a hand to another person for a moment. That is not meeting a person at all. That is why there are no relationships. There are houses but very few homes. There are verbal exchanges but very few relationships. There are adjustments to each other's idiosyncrasies but very few friendships. That is the world we are living in today. So when one stands in humility and innocence every mischievous trick of the ego is perceived in advance. Then that innocent gaze will be able to perceive what a fact of a human being is.

For me every human being is a mystery. I do not know how one can dare say that I know my husband or my wife. These are dynamic, moving entities. They are not like chairs, tables and walls, which are static. Every human being of tremendous, infinite potentiality of growing into divinity, is a mystery.

But we have the arrogance of judging others. The habit of judging and comparing others, of trying to shape them according to the convenience of our ego, is what is blocking the flow of love which is the essence of humanity. We have not got to acquire love from somewhere outside. We are made of love. The essence of our life is love. But we are blocking the way of love in all possible ways. Then we live in misery. We live in sorrow. When one does not have the arrogance of judging, comparing and evaluating others, when one tries to understand what the other says, then, we will see that much of the misery in human relationships will be naturally and logically reduced. The tensions that we

undergo, the suspenses, the excitements and the depressions that we go through are unwarranted. All the vices and weaknesses of human beings will get illuminated in the flood of understanding. A person mal-adjusted with the totality of himself, creates disturbance. He misbehaves. He insults. He gets irritated, he gets annoyed. Annoyance, irritation, envy and jealousy, indicates friction within oneself, a conflict within oneself. So the response will not be out of anger, but the response will breathe compassion for the person.

As the whole humanity is reduced to one global human family, it has become a historical necessity that man learns the way of compassion and love. It is not a 'must' for some chosen few retiring from the main stream of life, living in some monasteries, temples and mosques in some mountains. It is a historical necessity for you and me to grow into the maturity of living with one another in love and friendship. Human relationships should be motivated by love and lived through compassion. Then only the words brotherhood, peace, friendship, equality and fraternity will have some meaning. We do use these words today. But they do not mean much to us in our daily lives. They are just decorations of the intellect and means of emotional recreation. Words are only means of transport between individuals. They are means of communication. One has to be very attentive to understand what is indicated by the words.

Religion for me is the personal discovery which cannot be had through the symbols. One may get acquainted with the symbols. But one has to go beyond. We have human forms, we are human animals, but the human being is to emerge out of us. And the adventure of letting a human being be born within us must be gone through by every human being.

Questioner:
How must we apply ourselves in order to acquire this kind of confronation with the self?

Vimala:
Meditation seems to be the way. One can set about it by beginning to live in a creative way. Not doing anything mechanically out of habit, not doing anything passively but relating every movement to the totality of our life and acting out of that. For meditation it is obviously necessary to live in harmony with the body and the mind.

The foundation of meditation is laid upon a scentific, sane relationship with body and mind; then the harmony between the two creates a relaxation; in that relaxation, in the cessation of mental activity, energy gathers to its own source. It starts operating upon us. We do not have to operate upon it - it starts operating upon us.

Questioner:
Thank you.

Questioner:
We often hear the expression 'That person died too young'. How would you explain that? What is death?

Vimala:
Unfortunately I have to leave within ten minutes. I have got a meeting at three o'clock at Palo Alto.

Is death a physical phenomenon? We have many ideas about death. The word 'death' is heavily loaded with many unwarranted associations of ideas and emotions. We will have to purge the word first of many associations.

We do not know what living is. We do not know what death is. But the ego gets frightened when it sees someone

else 'dying' (I'm using it in quotes). It gets frightened, and in the effort to console itself, finds out many theories and interpretations. The urge for continuity which is the only motivating force for the ego, makes us find out many justifications and consolations. We cannot go into whether there is a life after death because we do not know what death is. We cannot go into theory of reincarnation; I am neither saying it is true nor it is not true. This is not a speculative game. Life and death, are the obverse and converse of the same phenomenon. They are too serious a phenomena to play with words. So, Sir, when you ask me what death is, I will have to ask your forgiveness. We cannot go into it in five minutes. I can say yes or no, but it will not make any sense. It will be of no use to any one of us.

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